

BIOGRAPHICAL LECTURES

GEORGE DAWSON M.A.



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BIOGRAPHICAL LECTURES

BY
GEORGE DAWSON, M.A.

EDITED BY
GEORGE ST CLAIR, F.G.S.

“There has perhaps never passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful.”—*Dr Johnson.*

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1886.

“Other men are lenses through which we read our own minds.

“It is natural to believe in great men.

“I count him a great man who inhabits a higher sphere of thought, into which other men rise with labour and difficulty; he has but to open his eyes to see things in a true light, and in large relations; whilst they must make painful corrections, and keep a vigilant eye on many sources of error.”

EMERSON.

P R E F A C E .

GEORGE DAWSON, whose sermons and prayers have already been published, was the best and best-known popular lecturer of our day. The eagerness with which he was sought after in all parts of the United Kingdom, and the large and delighted audiences always attracted and rivetted by his addresses, afforded testimony which was endorsed on all sides by the press. Even those who feared the tendency of his pulpit teaching united in praising him as an earnest and stirring lecturer.

Biographical literature was what he most loved, and perhaps no other man ever discoursed so sympathetically on so many authors. He delighted to analyze life and study character; and he said of himself that he would by choice have been a Professor of Human Nature.

He had a faculty for exposition, and in popularising the great masters of prose and verse he found his mission. At the same time he made his lectures a means of inculcating great principles. It was his object always to teach and elevate his present audience: and so we find him glancing frequently from the subject in hand to current events or passing follies, and the everlasting weaknesses of human nature. One might say of him what he himself says of Andrew Marvell, "He had a most biting, satirical talent: he used it lawfully, though." But he cherished a charity which overlooked a multitude of faults.

The impression made by his lectures, forty years ago, may be judged by the following paragraph from the *Manchester Guardian* of that date:—

“MR GEORGE DAWSON’S FIRST LECTURE ON THOMAS CARLYLE.
Delivered at the Manchester Athenæum.”

“This was altogether one of the most extraordinary and deeply interesting extemporaneous addresses we have ever heard. Not so much for its eloquence, though replete with that quality, of an earnest, real, and glowing character; nor for its illustrations and imagery, though these were numerous, varied, and striking;—but for its deep thought, wide comprehensive views, earnest sincerity and truthfulness, its elevated tone, its noble and generous estimate of man’s nature and worth, and its manly putting aside of petty conventionalities, and solemn regard for the great verities of life and immortality;—we repeat, it was one of the most thought-awakening lectures we ever listened to. It was not a mere lecture on Carlyle, but a comprehensive survey of the spirit of the 18th century, and that which is dawning, or dawned, in the 19th; a vigorous examination of the faults and merits of their literature and morality; an inquiry into the circumstances of the men that have effected a change in that spirit; a bold sweeping away of much of the nonsense written and spoken of the style of Carlyle; a glance at what he has done to bring us acquainted with the greatest men of the age, the writers of Germany; and, with all these, an excursive, yet not discursive, going forth into and laying bare of popular fallacies, prejudices, and weaknesses, and a manly, fearless assertion of the right, the just, and the true, which astonished and delighted his auditors, and won the assent of their conviction, as manifested by their enthusiastic plaudits.”

Mr Alexander Ireland—who, as a Director of the Athenæum, had been the means of introducing Mr Dawson to Manchester—was charmed and amazed at his success. In his pamphlet, “Recollections of George Dawson,” he speaks of “an ease and mastery of the resources of our language that surprised his hearers. Sentence followed sentence, faultless in construction and symmetry. A lecture of an hour and a half’s duration might have been printed from his *ipsissima verba* without a single alteration.

With such endowments, it was not wonderful that he made the lecture platform an educational agency. To his lectures and expositions (for he was a born expositor) numbers have been indebted for their first real knowledge of some of our greatest countrymen, historical as well as literary."

When the reader has gone through the Carlyle lecture, and those on Wordsworth and Coleridge, he will be able, in some measure, to appreciate the phenomenon of a young man of twenty-seven talking at such an elevation, for hours together, without the help of notes.

In many of the remaining lectures it will be only too apparent how much is lost by the meagre character of the newspaper reports.

In preparing the lectures for publication I have had the invaluable co-operation of Miss Beauclerc, who has been untiring in the collation of them from various reports, and has done much to restore their original form. In some instances she has added matter from her own shorthand notes.

The editor alone is responsible for the foot-notes.

GEORGE ST. CLAIR.

BIRMINGHAM, *September* 1885.

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GOOD QUEEN BESS.

BIRTH, 1533. ACCESSION, 1558. DEATH, 1603.

IT has been felt necessary by every generation to review the history of past generations, and to write it over afresh. No generation could write its own history so as to satisfy those coming after, for they would be prejudiced by the party spirit of the time, and influenced by "the powers that be." No one has suffered more from these sources than Queen Elizabeth; and because of the slander and abuse with which that great Protestant has been assailed, by Jesuits and others, whose prejudice or interests such a course suited, the present generation should seek to review her history. She was one of the most wonderful women this or any other nation has ever produced. We must not much regard those histories which begin with appeals to the Muses. However well Hume and Smollett, or others, may have drawn the character of Elizabeth to suit some tastes, there is yet room for more correct depiction; there is some ground left which we may go over orally and with advantage to ourselves.

You will perhaps have understood from the title of the lecture that I am going rather to discuss the personal and private character of her Gracious Majesty, Queen Bess, than to enter into the history of her time; because it must always be a subject of interest to know how the English people came to bestow upon her so affectionate, so familiar, and, after all, so glorious a name as "Good Queen Bess." If you remember whose daughter she was, and how much she inherited of her father's temper; if you remember the woman as the *Queen*, you will wonder how anybody dared to call her "Bess" at all; and as to calling her "Good Queen Bess," you will be certain—let historians alter her character as they may, let Scotchmen detest her as they please, or Roman Catholics hate her as much as they like—you will be certain there must have been something downright hearty and genial and national and plucky in her before she ever could have got the sweet, familiar name of

“Good Queen Bess.” In taking the title of my lecture I have duly considered the significance of nick-names. People have been handed down to posterity under various cognomens, which peculiarities mental or physical had caused to be given them. Monarchs in all ages have been nick-named, but the names some of our kings got for themselves, if notable, were not very noble. Thus, one king having short legs was called “Curt-hose,” *short stockings*. Well, you must be hard up for things to note about a man before you put *that* down in history—short-hose, short-legs! Then there was “Long-shanks;” and we are obliged to conclude that that man hadn’t very much that was noteworthy about him when the length of his legs is the main thing that history has recorded. There was another king whose lands were deeply mortgaged, and he was called “Lack-land.” (A vast *number* of them might have been called “Lack-brains.”) Another, who lacked hair upon his head, was known as “The Bald;” another comes down to us as “The Cruel.” But no king or queen ever gained so noble and glorious a title—so loving, so familiar, so enduring a nick-name—as “Good Queen Bess.” When you have set down all the names, even including “Richard Cœur de Lion,”—and *that* is a grand old name, first-rate for the age that he lived in,—still there is nothing that touches the heart like “Good Queen Bess.” When we remember how haughty and proud she was, what a tongue she had (for she could swear like a man when she thought it necessary, or her father’s fiery spirit got the better of her proud nature), how she made her courtiers go upon their knees before her, occasionally boxing their ears, and thought nothing of snubbing a lord; think of calling such a seeming virago Bess! the daughter of Henry VIII., Bess! *Good Queen Bess!* a title so hard to win from this churlish world. With such a name she stands firm and strong, and no possible Jesuits, no absurd drivellers about Mary Stuart, no petty tea-table people, can upset her. You may upset Queen Elizabeth, but you can never upset Good Queen Bess. Hers was the most lovable label that king or queen ever yet bore, and I hope to be able to prove that she deserved it too.

I shall illustrate what Bacon has called some of the “softnesses” of Elizabeth, and I shall also show her strength. People have been ever glad to find out her faults; but then you all know

how very gratifying it is to find a wen on a beautiful face; and that her faults were, after all, nothing more than a mole upon the noblest countenance—a mere spot on marble—I shall be able to show. I look upon Queen Elizabeth as the most thorough-paced Englishman (and I use the word advisedly) this land has ever produced; and as I am an admirer of the most thoroughly English character, I would, if it were only for that one thing, defend Good Queen Bess against all the sentimental cant which springs out of a romantic sympathy for Mary of Scotland, and from all the other sources of prejudice and injustice by which her character and memory have been assailed.

Now, recall for a moment or two the time in which she lived—the very brightest in the history of the human intellect. Her reign was unquestionably the most glorious one of modern times. It was one of the most glorious periods of human history ever recorded out of God's Holy Book. The Augustan eras of Rome, of Leo X., of Queen Anne, or the much-vaunted days of Louis XIV., all "pale their ineffectual fires" before Elizabeth's. There were giants in Queen Elizabeth's days, and though the woman was surrounded by the tallest men, physically as well as intellectually, her great, grand intellect was perceptible over them all. I should not say this if we had to judge of her by a tea-table standard or at a Dorcas meeting, or by the meek, mild, solemn standard of to-day; for if we were so to review her we should never understand her. She is too big for such microscopes as these. She must not be looked at close-to. She must be regarded with becoming reverence from a distance, or we shall not see much more than the hem of her garment. You cannot paint her portrait on an inch of canvas. We must be prepared to find her of super-human height, and according as we realise that impression we shall view her properly. She was surrounded with the grandest men that ever lived in any nation or in this world. She had Shakespeare for her dramatist, Bacon for her philosopher, Spenser for her poet; Sidney was the finished model of all chivalry and gentlemanliness, Walter Raleigh the splendorous man whose erratic course ever dazzled and puzzled mankind; there never was a better sailor than Drake or Frobisher: and these are only a few of the mighty men that surrounded this mighty woman. Remember it was a thorough English age: it wasn't classical; it wasn't French;

it was nothing borrowed; the English genius came out only,—national, and racy of the soil, instinctive, peculiar.

Now, if you remember these things, you must remember also that all these men admitted that this was the greatest woman they had ever met with. Bacon says, “She is the greatest woman I ever knew.” Of course we have to allow a little for chivalry and loyalty, and for that bad habit we men have of flattering women; still, a woman that kept her head up amongst men like those I have named must have been remarkable, and you may be certain that nothing will ever be done by critical examination to diminish her claim to the loyalty and love of the English nation. For she lived in an age celebrated not alone for the genius of the men that surrounded her, but also for the noble qualities of those men. It was an age of intense loyalty, and loyalty of a noble sort. It was an age of adventure, when the great Englishman turned out to fight the Spaniard, wherever he could find him; the age that discovered the Southern Main and its riches; the age when Drake, in that little ship, went to take the first look at the Pacific, and then vowed to God that he would see that sea again—and he lived to keep his vow. The age of Elizabeth is one of the mountain-tops; the old times are there, and the new times are there. It was the age of chivalry, and it was the age of commerce. Drake is most justly considered to be a man embodying the two principles—as plucky and as full of fight as ever was a knight of the Round Table, whilst he was as glorious a bagman as ever turned out from a commercial room. When Drake went out to meet “hard blows and hard cash,” as his nephew says in the title-page of his adventures (“The Adventures of Sir Francis Drake, in search of Hard Blows and Hard Cash”), he always fought the Spaniards, and he always pouched his dollars at the same time. He would fight any man at any time, but he always took care to fill his bag after the battle; and he stands out as one of the most memorable men in history for this strange combination of the old fighting spirit and the modern utilitarian and commercial spirit. We may look upon it as at once a most poetical and a most practical age, and it is one we ought to love on account of its being an intensely English age—the most characteristically national period in our history.

Now, topping all these men, stands this colossal woman. If

you approach her with your little notions of what is right and wrong, you will manage just to see her shoe-tie, and probably you will miss everything else. Colossal, strange, marvellous, wonderful, contrary to all rule, she requires no close inspection to do her justice. The microscope may be turned on her, and you may see one of her infirmities, and there you stop; but if you will only go far enough back, and try to enter into the spirit of those days, you will reverence her as one of the greatest of human beings. You must not, however, to appreciate her to the full, regard her as a woman. She partook, it is true, of some of the nonsenses and absurdities of women, without some of their great virtues; but she borrowed from men all that was great and subtle and wise, without participating in any of their weaknesses and fooleries. In private, perhaps, somewhat of the fool, in public she was one of the wisest of the wise. As that finest old statesman, Lord Burleigh, said of her, she was "one of the wisest women he ever knew." Some of your blasphemers may assert that that is not saying much; but still Burleigh said it, and Burleigh meant it. We find her learned, courageous, true-hearted, full of English pluck. We understand what Burleigh meant. That grand prophecy of Shakespeare's, which had the advantage of being written after the fact, was what Shakespeare believed and felt and knew of her, and she was enshrined by him for immortality.*

But if I could only defend Queen Elizabeth by Englishmen's votes and voices, there were but little in it; we know, however, that eminent Frenchmen have given equally emphatic testimony to her great merits. The great French king of the time said he should be happy to be her captain-general. And the Pope—very good evidence, you know, with regard to Queen Elizabeth, whatever we may think of such evidence in other matters—Pope Sixtus said there were only three great personages in the world who were fit to reign. Of course *he* was one, Elizabeth was another, and Henry Quatre the third. And a noble trio they were—Sixtus, Elizabeth, and Henry IV. The Pope, speaking to Englishmen, once said, "Your Queen is happily born: she governs her kingdom well." And then, falling into speculations not quite becoming to his Holiness, he said, "Only let me marry her, and we shall give the world a second Alexander the Great!" You see

* See page 32.

what Sixtus thought of her. Fancy a Pope saying that! And what did the Frenchmen call her in those days?—"L'Etoile du Nord." Would they have done that without occasion? You will answer that Frenchmen are very apt to get praising English things, though when they do so we usually take it as flattery. But what did the most learned of Jesuits, Père Dolan, say? He said, "Never did crowned head know better the art of governing, nor were fewer faults ever committed in a long reign." Such testimony as that must be final; for the Jesuits were not likely to speak too much in her favour.

Now, as opposed to these men—Henry Quatre, Père Dolan, and Pope Sixtus—I do not mind what historians say. Critical examination possibly may weaken the character of Queen Elizabeth on some points which affect the testimony of her own people, and which led them to call her "Good Queen Bess;" but the admiration of these giant foreigners, when they praised her as the greatest of queens, weighs much with me.

But remember, Queen Elizabeth is a monster, scientifically speaking, just as much as a mermaid is. She joined together the greatest qualities of a great man and the foolishness of a great woman.

Shall I first descant upon her great and good characteristics, and then, like the scandal-mongers of the present day, let her quietly down?—"She was great, and good, and wise, but—" Or shall I examine all the faults that have been laid to her charge, and then endeavour to show that her foibles were overcome and obscured by all that is memorable and glorious? Adopting the latter as the more just and preferable course, we will look first at her amazing vanity. It was like herself, wonderful, colossal, ineffable, inexplicable, only to be illustrated by anecdotes; but as to being sounded—no, I cannot do it. Her sacred Majesty had an amazing opinion of her own beauty, which she carried to such an extent as to appoint a "Serjeant" Painter, in the person of George Gower, granting to him under the royal seal the exclusive privilege of painting or engraving her portrait. I believe that when young she really was good-looking; but the daubers had painted her portrait badly, and she became angry about it, which was natural enough. The instructions she gave to the artist are perfectly charming. She ordered her portrait to be painted with

the light coming neither from the right nor from the left. She could not bear that a shadow should fall upon her lovely countenance, so it must be painted in the open garden light, and there must be on it no manner of fleck. Those who know that her nose was prominent, and inclined to elevation at the tip, will well understand why she did not care to see her profile.

She was proud of her hands. Hear a story told of her by a foreigner, a Frenchman, who came over as an ambassador's attendant. We will have it in French first. There are only two of you, you know, who don't understand the French language, but for those two I will translate it. "*Elle ôta ses gants cent fois pour nous faire voir ses mains qui étaient très joliment modelées et très blanches.*" *She ungloved herself a hundred times to let us see her hands, which were very prettily shaped and very white.* You know that some men and women do think a great deal of their hands. You and I, you know, have watched their tricks when they wanted to display a white hand. "*Elle ôta ses gants cent fois pour nous faire voir ses mains qui étaient très joliment modelées et très blanches.*" Touching Her Majesty's vanity, that is a fine story.

She objected strongly to ugly and deformed people, and would have none such near her court. She was very vain, and we are told that on one occasion a young Hollander, who came over in the suite of the Ambassador of the States General, was overcome with her beauty. During the conversation with the Queen, he talked aside with an Englishman. As soon as the Queen found he was a handsome man—for a handsome man always fixed the eyes of "Good Queen Bess"—she noticed him. She afterwards asked the Englishman what the young Hollander was talking to him about, and he replied that the young Hollander had said she was the most beautiful woman that ever he saw. She wasn't angry; no, she wasn't; she bore it with patience and fortitude; and by-and-bye, when the embassy was about to go home, she presented to the ambassador—a heavy old fellow, I dare say, with nothing personal to recommend him—she presented *him* with 800 crowns, but to the handsome young Hollander, who had been dazzled with her beauty, she presented 1600 crowns. See the difference. Old fogey or an ambassador, doing his duty, 800 crowns; young Hollander, dazzled—or pretending to be dazzled

—with her beauty, 1600 crowns. Never was vanity, perhaps, better set forth than in this episode. In flattering her, the thicker it was laid on the more she believed it, and it called forth her lasting favour, but perhaps not any great gifts; and as she was often told that her smile was more precious than gold, she may be pardoned if she very frequently took her courtiers at their word, and paid them in smiles.

And what a woman she was for dress! She had this vanity in its most wonderful form and most absurd proportions. Dress was her joy: she sacrificed to it, she lived for it, she delighted in it. Through her whole life she was wont to be arrayed in all her glory, and the Queen of Sheba would have had a hard business to make herself equal to Queen Elizabeth. Her taste for jewels was barbaric. Her delight was in pearls. Every woman of sense chooses such jewels as best harmonise with her complexion. Her sacred Majesty wore pearls wherever they could be put on—round her forehead, round her throat, and in her bows, and in her earrings, and in her frills, and in her lace, and on her lappets. Everything she had on was covered with pearls, even to her boots. When she was young, she was badly off (for a princess) for dress. You know she was a sort of poor relation, and she had a very shabby outfit; but when she came to her own she made up for lost time in a most marvellous way. If you look into the “Gazette” of that day you will see every now and then advertisements of this sort, “Lost, from Her Majesty’s back, a gold enamelled acorn;” “Lost, from Her Majesty’s hat, two ruby buttons.” The fact is, she shed pearls, gems, and so forth, wherever she went. She was like the great Esterhazy of the last generation, whose dress was so rich that it cost him a little fortune every time he wore it, and, when he left the room, made the fortunes of those who swept it. When Elizabeth died, as it often happens in this wicked world the robes of majesty came to the auctioneer. You remember when George IV. died, they sold his wardrobe: it was said to have cost £100,000; it fetched a good deal. We are gentle to him; for, as he had no interior qualifications, he was perfectly entitled to depend upon exterior ones. But Her Majesty’s wardrobe was wonderful. For instance, she had eighty wigs, the newest of which was the reddest; she was an artist in wigs, and as she got older—being ashamed of age and trying to hide it—she cautiously had

them made to suit the changed *contour*. The Bishop of London once preached a sermon before her on "the love of dress." She resented it very much, and the bishop got a "wiggling."

She was as pert about other people's dress as she was nice about her own. She snubbed Fletcher, Bishop of London, because his beard was too short, and would have him lengthen it. When Harrington went to court, he wore a frieze jerkin, so well made that she looked at him and said, "I will have one too." She was one of the first women—they are at it again now—who appeared in men's coats. Sir Matthew Arnley went to Court in a fringed suit, and, oh, that he had not done it! for we are told by the gossips that Her Majesty actually spat upon it, and she said, "A fool's wit has gone to rags." For what is fringe? Fringe is nothing but systematic rags, good stuff slit into rags—hideous, abominable! Poor Sir Matthew shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Heaven spare me from such gibery!" And so she, with her imperious, feminine temper, had her own ideas about dress. She kept an eye also on the swords that were worn, and had them clipped if they were too long. Like Peter the Great, she would have a man at the gate to set the men's dress in order; and if the tails were too long, the tails had to be shortened.

Well, the poor Queen got old, and (I hardly like to tell you, such is my respect for her; but, then, we are going to see the noble side of her by-and-bye, so I may say it) she took to paint and rouge. I am sorry to say she practised two distinct arts—rouging and enamelling. And one day—such are the records of her folly—the women who dressed her (and they had a hard time of it) determined to spite Her Majesty. You know, when a woman is spiteful you must look out! What did they do? She had a fine nose. (Of course she must have had, because no one with a very little nose ever did much in this world. Napoleon I. is represented as liking men with big noses; and in fact, a big nose is the outward sign of an indwelling grace.) What do you think these wicked sluts did? The Queen, since she had been getting old, never liked looking in the glass, and they knew it, so one morning they actually rouged her nose, just the tip, and her sacred Majesty came down into the court, her nose looking like a promontory with a lighthouse at the end, standing out and flickering.

Poor Essex once happened to see Her Majesty before she was

dressed for the day : she had gone to her window to get some air ; he had gone to a window, and he happened to see her. He ran off for his dear life, for she hadn't her paint on. He saw her as she was : it was a sight to be remembered, shuddered at, and fled from. Now, lest some of you, full of diction, should think I am merely inventing this nonsense, let me remind you of what Lord Bacon said,—“She imagined that people were much influenced by externals, and would be diverted by the glitter of her jewels from noticing the decay of her personal attractions ;” and after Lord Bacon has spoken, let all people be silent.

Elizabeth had a dairy at Barn Elms,* and used to go down there and dress herself as a milkmaid. (And so poor Marie Antoinette liked to play at being a dairymaid. It isn't a bad thing, you know ; it gives you a chance of showing your white arms contrasting with the milk—a fine difference of tint, excellent for an artist to render !) Thomas Fuller, a great wit and a great divine, justifies all this seeming nonsense in her. He says : “She was a person tall, of hair and complexion fair, well favoured but high nosed, her limbs and features neat, of a stately and majestic deportment. She had a piercing eye, wherewith she used to search what male strangers were made of who were admitted into her presence ; but as she counted it a pleasing conquest of her majestic looks to dash strangers out of countenance, so she was merciful in pursuing those whom she overcame, and afterwards would cherish and comfort them with her smiles, if she perceived outwardliness of the right sort and modest temper.” So says the divine, and many stories show it. She used to look at people to see if she could confuse them ; if they blushed and hung down their heads as if conquered by her mien, she beckoned them to come to her, and then, as the old divine said, “she greatly comforted and cherished them !”

Well, by-and-bye, the matter of painting Her Majesty's portrait, of which we have spoken already, became a state affair, and, if you are curious, and search into our old libraries, you will find state papers on the subject. For instance, there is one with a preamble that says, “Whereas, hitherto, none think sufficiently expressed the natural representation of Her Majesty's person, favour, or grace, it is hereby notified that, at the request of the Privy Council, Her

* At south-west corner of St James's Park.

Majesty is forced to declare that some cunning person, meet therein-for, shall shortly make a portrait of Her Majesty's person, countenance, or visage, to be participated to others for satisfaction of her loving subjects." All persons are then ordered to forbear till the right picture is ready, and Sir Walter Raleigh tells us that the pictures of Queen Elizabeth made by unskilful and common painters were, by her commandment, knocked in pieces and cast into the fire. George Gower, a portrait painter, was the happy man to whom was given the warrant of appointment, and the warrant runs with a fine legal flavour about it: "That to the said George Gower be granted to have the sole lawful privilege, license, power, and authority, that he, the said George Gower, by himself, his deputy or deputies, assignee or assignees, only and none other, shall and may from henceforth, for and during his natural life, make or cause to be made all and all manner of portraits and pictures of our person, lineaments, physiognomy, and proportions of our body, in oil colours, upon boards or canvass, also to 'grave the same in copper, and to cut the same in wood, or to paint the same, being cut, in copper or wood, or otherwise, and the said portraits, pictures, and proportions of our body so being engraved or cut, to print or cause to be printed." Then came the fines for meddlers with the sublime privilege of painting the glorious Queen, ten pounds (exception in favour of Nicholas Hilliard, who might make portraits of smaller dimensions); and, lastly, the said George Gower was authorised to hunt up all contraband portraits and prints, and all justices, mayors, and magistrates were ordered to help him in the pursuit. Perhaps never was the language of the law employed more majestically about so small a matter as a portrait. Well, when the Queen sat for her portrait, of course it was very glorious to paint. And we here come back to her marvellous vanity. Look at the picture! It is garnished with diamonds—£4000 in worth at that time.

Then, again, her sacred Majesty had a wonderful liking for presents, though she had a very slender talent for giving them. (It doesn't do to let one person have all the talents you know.) She was the original "horse-leech's daughter," crying incessantly, "Give, give!" Her Majesty's hand was always open to receive, and her courtiers knew well that the way to please her was to give her something agreeable and valuable. She goes down once to

visit one of her nobles. On this occasion a fine gown and a jupon, things pleasing to her Highness, are presented; but, to show how pleased she is, she takes from him of her own accord a fork, a spoon, a salt, and an agate! Could there be any more touching proof of gratitude for her entertainment than this?

When Elizabeth went out in public she wore high-heeled shoes (though she stood five feet nine inches without them), a most subtle thing to do, for it shows how well she knew the people. She knew that they would like her better for her height than for her talents, and that the inch added to her heels would insure her more admiration than two chapters of Solomon added to her wisdom.

When she went to church she sat in a pew with a lattice round it, and when the bishops or clergy alluded in their sermons to subjects she liked not, the lattice rattled, and she glared through it at the preacher. She, however, soon forgave and forgot any of these things. Then she got aged; yes, aged; till one day Rudd, the Bishop of St David's, in the appropriate season of Lent, in the year 1596, thought it his duty to warn Her Majesty that she was getting to that period of life when it was time to put aside rouge-pots and furbelows, and "make up her soul," as the saying is, and get ready for the last journey. But he knew whom he had to deal with, and so, like a wise navigator, he thought he would "fetch a compass," and so get into port. So, instead of saying anything about her age, he began a discourse on sacred principles in general, and pointed out how Pythagoras discoursed of the number seven; and then he discoursed of the number three, and spoke of the Trinity and its mystery; and in reference to the number seven referred to the two Sabbaths, to seven times seven, the year of jubilee; and now he thought he might run on, and he began to speak of seven times nine, one of the climacteric years, you know. He was now getting wise, and no doubt he was watching the royal pew in the gallery. At any rate he thought he had better stand off a while again. So then he got on to that number so dear to Protestants, that sweet number—I cannot pronounce it without a thrill—number 666. It is a wonderful number. Nobody understands it, and that is one of its charms; for as soon as these things are understood they cease to interest. Now, he thought, he could do it; and so he got back

to his seven times nine again. Now he was going to run into her number. Her sacred Majesty, sitting in a sort of box in the gallery, had been leaning forward for some time, and by-and-bye that glorious nose peeped out, and her temper broke out, and she said to the bishop, "You keep your arithmetic to yourself: the greatest clerks are seldom the wisest men." The poor bishop, he shrank into his sleeves, and fairly shrivelled into his native nothingness; and when he got out of the pulpit he got advised that he had better not go to court for a few days. He didn't go; and yet the woman was so gracious that, when he did go back, she gave him a little jewel, just to show that she had forgiven him. Wasn't he a brave bishop? Such was her vanity—her consummate vanity.

Another bishop also tried to do her a kindness by being "faithful" to her, as the preachers call it. "One Sunday in April last," says an old chronicler, "my Lord of London preached to the Queen's Majesty, and essayed to touch on the vanity of decking the body too finely. Her Majesty told the Lords that if the bishop held any more discourse upon such matters as that, she would fit him for heaven; but he should walk thither without his staff, and he should leave his mantle behind him. So the bishop perhaps mended his manners, for he knew he had spoken full plainly."

And what a charming story for those of us who love the ins and outs of human nature, is that one told by Sir Roger Aston, who was the ambassador to Queen Elizabeth from James of Scotland. He declares that he was once up in the lobby at Court, and the hangings were judiciously turned so that he could look in. You know, of course, how to let a person look into a room with curtains without seeming to know of it—the curtains get put aside by accident. Well, there was the Queen in her apartment. She was then somewhat old, and the ambassador saw her dancing to a little fiddle. One version of the story says the page was playing the fiddle; the other says her sacred Majesty was playing it. At any rate, the old Queen, with her rheumatic limbs, was there dancing about. Why was it done? She knew what the old hungry Scotchman had come for. He had come to see whether the fat English cherry was likely to drop into King James's mouth just yet, and Elizabeth danced in spite of her rheu-

matic limbs, as much as to say, "There! there is life in the old girl yet;" that he might go and tell his old cake-eating master, Elizabeth was "to the fore," and wasn't going to die just at present. So goes the story, true or not.

Then, you remember, Elizabeth was very fond—not of marriage! She never did marry, and it would be a long history to go into the reasons. I have looked into the subject a great many times, and I believe, after all—I am a fanatic, I dare say, for believing it, but I do believe it—that her love of this nation was so great, that she was unwilling to saddle it with any foreign master whatever—unwilling to entangle the nation by her marriage with any foreigner. She knew the whole world hated England. The hatred of the world is our dowry: we have it now, and we ever shall have it. This nation was never loved yet, and never will be; and if this nation be wise, it will trouble its wise head very little about the love of the world. Well, she knew that nobody loved us, and she determined to keep, as far as she could, this nation unentangled by foreign alliance. It was a good deal to give up, and she took it out as far as she could; for, though she was never married, she liked the preliminaries immensely. Her flirtations were her amusements at which she played, knowing well that she was playing the fool, but also knowing well when to stop. Once or twice she made a mistake, 'tis true, but so do all people make mistakes sometimes. I cannot interpret that woman in any other way, but that her glowing patriotism was the barrier that hindered her marriage. But as long as it was simply a matter of preliminary, she liked it. The fact is, that, like most sensible women, she preferred the society of men to the society of women. She liked men about her, and the great men of her times were like most great men—they liked to play at being subdued. It is fun for a strong man to give in to a woman's will; it doesn't hurt him, and it pleases her. Too much has been made of Queen Elizabeth's flirtations. All great minds are accustomed to relaxation, and often the direction which it takes is foolish and eccentric. History is full of such cases. Samson may lay his head on Delilah's lap, and Hercules will spin for Omphale, and if he doesn't do his spinning well, the woman shall take her little shoe and tap the great giant. I dare say he hardly knew where it was that she tapped him, but he just felt a slight

tickle somewhere or other. You know that Catherine of Russia, again, liked to go through these preliminaries and performances, and so it was with Queen Elizabeth and some great men about her. They knew how to humour her. Essex understood it, and pretended, as Walter Raleigh did, to be dazzled, and that he could hardly look upon her glory. To be, like Hercules, so entirely her worshipper as to spin for her, to take the distaff, and to submit to be beaten with a shoe—you and I understand these things perfectly well, far better than the solemn historians who often miss the meaning of things. A story is told of a rare game at skittles between Luther and Melancthon; whilst Elizabeth's amusement was flirtation.

Her love of favourites, which has been often brought against her, should have a word. Her favourites were not cormorants who fed upon the people; she knew how to rein them in, and always kept them, like a skilful horseman, well in hand. And then, as very often happens with women who don't get married, or can't, they hate to see anybody else get married. You remember how savagely she behaved when poor Raleigh married Elizabeth Throgmorton. She sent a boat with them to the Tower. Did she send them to the Tower *together*? Oh, no! She sent one to one wing, and the other to the other wing. There was no fun in sending two lovers to the Tower, if they were to be in the same room. And then it was that Raleigh—that glorious man, incapable of meanness beyond any other man perhaps of his own or any other times; the splendidest man for variety of gift, fertility of genius, largeness of adventure, splendour of intellect, that this world has ever produced—then it was that he sat down and wrote one of those fulsome letters to Her Majesty, that make one blush for the greatness of the man. He knew her; he knew he could not pile it up too mountainously for her to believe. He who flattered the most was surest to please. Raleigh expressed himself thus:—

“I am in despair, I, who have been wont to behold Her Majesty riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, dancing like Terpsichore, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her fair hair round her pure cheeks; sometimes sitting in the shadow like a goddess, sometimes singing like an angel, sometimes playing like Orpheus.” And on he goes. He told her all this. She wasn't

angry. She bore it with great equanimity. This and many other things, for these stories might be greatly multiplied.

Scandals about Queen Bess have become proverbial in the English tongue. But what are they? They are the "shadows" in the portrait, which she was vain enough to wish omitted. That fine nose of hers was sure to cast a long shadow; but the grandeur of her character can well afford to throw the long shadows of her vanity, her love of dress, her coquetry, her love of receiving favours, and her infinite capriciousness.

Her *personnel*, her proud and lofty mien, her courtesy and gracefulness, the number and magnificence of her retinue, and the obsequious formalities she enforced at court, have been testified to by Hentzner, a German, who visited this country at the period, and gave a very graphic description of Queen Elizabeth in her fifty-sixth year. Her face, he said, was fair but wrinkled, her eyes black, her nose hooked, and her teeth black, &c.

She was a fearfully stingy person, I admit, but when we look at its effect—that her parsimony tended to keep the taxes low—whilst we sneer at it in private life as unworthy of a queen, and wonder at her greediness (for she accepted six pairs of stockings with great pleasure and never gave anybody anything if she could help it), yet we see that all her meanness had a beneficial effect. She knew that a heavily-taxed people was an over-burdened people, and Her Majesty's parsimony was upon the whole one of the great distinguishing characteristics of her reign. She had a subtle and politic reason for it. I have often suspected that those wonderful visits to the nobility were paid to gratify her love of splendour without her having to pay for it; and then, in addition, she had so fine a touch of the under-politics of the world, such a fine touch of diplomacy, that I suspect she sometimes visited a nobleman in order to reduce him in his circumstances. For, by her visits, whilst she complimented a nobleman, she so effectually drained his resources, that his estates did not recover for generations. It was preferable to beheading her nobles, and more easy. She was capable of practising finesse in politics to an extreme; and then she had Lord Burleigh for her statesman, and she was thoroughly up in mining and countermining. She had a proud oligarchy to humble, and she took the best means of doing it, for she took such a retinue, and stayed so long, and caused so

much to be eat and drunk and otherwise expended, that (no wonder) the nobles were afterwards poor, but she always kept the taxes on the poor people down. And she did this as a matter of policy. But, as I have said, she never gave anybody anything if she could help it. And do you remember those terrible lines in which poor Spenser, who had been to Court, and had no doubt given Her Majesty many things and never got anything in return, —do you remember those wonderful lines, in which he tells people of what comes of putting one's trust in kings and queens?

“ Full knowest thou that oft hast tried,
 What hell it is in sueing long to bide ;
 To lose good days that might be better spent,
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent ;
 To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow ;
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;
 To have their prince's grace, yet wait his tears,
 To have their asking, yet wait many years ;
 To fret their soul with crosses and with cares,
 To teach their heart through comfortless despairs ;
 To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
 To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.”

That was the history of going to the Court of Queen Elizabeth in the experience of poor Spenser.

We have now considered the weaknesses, or “softnesses,” as Bacon terms them, of Queen Elizabeth's character, and if you choose to regard her as a woman, you will gather from what I have told you that she was a very weak, silly woman. If, however, you will regard her as a man, you will find that her qualities in that respect were admirable. But let us lay aside all such considerations, and look upon her, as Hume has said, “as a rational being, entrusted with the government of mankind.” She was too much of a *character* to be much liked as a woman. Pope has said that it is true of most women that “they have no character at all.” Of course some of you object to that, and Pope has been risen up against for having written that same passage. But Coleridge at length sought to explain it, by saying that Pope must have said it in satire ; and when you so regard it, you can forgive the hunchbacked satirist, for there is much truth in what he said. Why, Shakespeare's perfection of women seem in many instances

to be characterless. We all like Desdemona and Ophelia, but then they would not have done to have governed England. Turn to Elizabeth, and you find such a strong, manful, angular, incisive, decisive, prompt character that no man could have married her for other purposes than statecraft. Men generally like to see women bestow their kindness and gentleness upon their own sex. Elizabeth never did so; she never had any to bestow. To women she never was lovely or gentle; to a rival she was never merciful; and she disregarded all sentimental affectation and pity.

But let us see how she maintained the other point with which I, in the first instance, set out—namely, her greatness as a *man*. How came the English to love such a woman as this? Well, it was because she was so thoroughly hearty; and she had the sense to know where she was and who she was, and that is one of the primest virtues that a monarch can have. It was the alpha and omega of Elizabeth's character. How many of the kings of Europe at the present time know where they are? Why, one of them is about at the fourteenth century, and another has got as far as the sixteenth; and we might go further on and find kingdoms where nature is lovely, pure, and beautiful, and only men and kings are vile. But Queen Elizabeth knew well her time, and the necessity of her nation. She saw Martin Luther, and understood his great work. She saw that Popes' Bulls were burnt, and that excommunications were utterly disregarded. She knew the English; she knew she belonged to this little sea-engirdled island. She understood where God had put her, namely, on a shaky throne; she knew that the Pope, and the French, and everybody else, were against her, and she determined that she would steady the throne. She did it, and before she died her throne stood steadfast in justice and righteousness. She strengthened the nation, developed its resources, and made it righteous and noble. She looked upon this little island, and saw at a glance where it must be, as it ever had been, great. She saw that it must be great on the sea. Everybody sees this now; but she *foresaw* it, and considering that admirals were not at that time so plentiful as they are at present, it showed her greatness of mind and thought. She understood the sea, and loved it; and whoever loves the sea shall have the Englishman's love up to the end

of the chapter. None of your tubes and tunnels and bridges for me! Stick to the old sea; it is our safeguard and our stay, our peculiarity and our eccentricity and our glory. It is the best defence that ever the nation had yet. It is worth all the mud of the walls that artillerymen ever battered down or raised up; and Elizabeth knew it. Seamanship was her delight. She built ships herself, and encouraged merchants to build them; and whenever she found a good seaman she honoured him. Thus, when Hawkins came home from his successful negro expedition, she, having got over her original prejudice against the traffic, gave him a crest, and it was a characteristic one—a negro proper. When Admiral Drake, the boldest seaman the world ever had, came home from his cruise, she went down to Deptford and went on board his little ship of only 120 tons burden, in which he had sailed round the world, and to which the ship of the famous Argonauts is as nothing—the ship of ships, the one colossal ship of the world, the ship of the Devonshire Drake, who sailed the Pacific, fought the Spaniards, and came off glorious! Yes, she went down and knighted the gallant sailor on his own deck. *There* was a woman of sense—or rather a man! She didn't send for Drake to come to Court to be knighted; but she said, "I will go down and knight him on his own deck." These were things the nation relished. Here was a dash of sea-water that won her the love of this island people. She was the restorer of our naval glory. Foreigners called her "Queen of the Northern Seas;" and I will, in spite of any critics, living or dead, own her as Queen and Ruler. Yes, she understood sea-water to be England's glory and England's strength. This is, and always has been, our delight; long may it remain, as it was to our forefathers, our safeguard and our impregnable dominion.

There was a great deal of good sense in Queen Elizabeth. She hated nonsense—excepting in the rouging department; but with that single exception, and speaking of her as a monarch, as a king, as a man, I say she hated nonsense. She governed her weaknesses, managed her softnesses, and never allowed them to run away with her. As a woman, she liked courtship; but she always contrived to keep her lovers as friends for some purposes of statecraft. Her policy was wonderful; for if she discarded a suitor, she was sure to keep him for future contingencies, though

she took good care not to have any of them hanging about and doing nothing (for no king ever afflicted a reign less with Court favourites).

There was once a quarrel between Sir Francis Drake and an old aristocratic baronet, Sir Barnard Drake, some "tenth transmitter of a foolish face," in Devonshire; some genealogical squabble. She soon set them right. She never troubled her head about questions of genealogy and heraldry. Not she. She gave to Sir Francis Drake a crest, of a ship in full sail, with the cable running up to the skies, indicating he had been heaven-guided, and with the motto, "By Thy help I have done it;" and then—splendid piece of satire on the old baronet—for old Sir Barnard Drake's escutcheon she had some geese hung up by the heels and fastened on the mainsail of Sir Francis Drake's vessel. She soon settled that heraldic squabble. One of the greatest things a ruler can do, she did grandly—she expressed her profound contempt for stupidity, and her glorious admiration for capability. When I want to worship Queen Elizabeth, I go down in thought to Deptford; I see the old Devonshire salt on his knees; the sword touches his naval dress as the Sovereign says, "Rise, Sir Francis." This scene, to me, shows one of the great acts that won for Good Queen Bess old England's love.

Then she paid the debts which were incumbent on the Crown when she ascended the throne, and she also repaid the loans which she herself contracted. Wonderful trait in the character of a king! Why, whoever thinks now-a-days of kings paying their debts? But Queen Elizabeth had a ridiculous sense of honesty and a fantastical righteousness which made her pay the Crown debts. Then she had the national arsenals furnished with arms, encouraged commerce, and allowed the free export of corn. She was a great prophetess, understood thoroughly and heartily the people of her times, and saw, even then, that it was good for a nation to do what we, nearly three hundred years afterwards, have hardly persuaded our wise governments to allow us to do.

What Elizabeth held she held tightly, and what she gave up she relinquished gracefully. None knew better than she how to make a virtue of necessity. She had once or twice to submit to the House of Commons; but she did it in such a way as made them think that it was just what she was contemplating for the public

good. The Commons consequently thought her a most wise and wonderful woman, and that they themselves were a set of laggards, always behind their great mistress. In this quality she shone out conspicuously; and if Charles the First had but understood it, he might, in all probability, have kept his head on longer. Why, this wonderful woman could smile people out of their own belief—and she could swear at them, too, in such round terms as I could not quote. It has been said that she was a despot. Not she. True, she ruled by despotic forms; but these forms came to her with the crown, and it is nonsense to talk about her despotism simply because her reign has not been handed down to us in a nineteenth century basket. Why, under the shield of her despotism liberty grew and flourished, and kept England free from foreign invasion, and made us a terror to foreign foes.

Then she was a learned woman too (the Protestant women of that time were more learned than the women of our time). What does her accomplished tutor, Roger Ascham, tell us? He says: "For two years she pursued the study of Greek and Latin under my tuition." Another says: "The Lady Elizabeth has accomplished her sixteenth year, and so much solidity of understanding, such courtesy united with dignity, has never been observed in one of so early an age, and that combined with the love of true genius, and of the best kind of literature." How many women do you think there are here who can read Greek at twenty? I don't know any. I am very much prejudiced, no doubt; and yet you know that Roger Ascham called one day at Lady Jane Grey's father's house, and they were all gone a-hunting except the Lady Jane. What was she doing? Reading the *Phædo* of Plato. In those days, when the Reformation had kindled the human intellect, and lighted a sublime fire, the women amongst the upper classes were educated to a pass that they have since lost and slipped down from. Queen Elizabeth's learning was extensive, solid, and deep; it kept pace with that of the great men of the Reformation, and she had a profound love for it. She understood Latin, she spoke very decent French, she spoke Spanish fairly. When ambassadors came to her, she could talk to them in their own language. It must be admitted, though, that she talked French like an Englishwoman, and the French ambassador, when he went home, said that her accent was bad. She remem-

bered that and made a note of it, for she kept a grudge-book. She was a downright learned woman, though, or rather she was a learned man. She was, withal, genial and generous, which made her a fosterer of learning in others.

As to Elizabeth being religious, for my part I think she *was* so. But if you come to set up some small pettifogging standard, such as not using a sword, not reading a novel, not going to the theatre, I will not answer for it, nor care for your judgment. If, however, the setting down of her own will in conformity with God's will, for the promotion of his glory and the welfare of the nation, the setting before herself and her people the noble aims of righteousness and justice, the noble uses of learning, and the happiness of virtue ; if all these are regarded as manifestations of a religious life, then I will say that, spite of all her vanities and softnesses, she had in her heart true religion and relied upon God. Perhaps she leaned too much sometimes upon herself ; but still, withal, I look upon her as a religious woman.

Elizabeth is generally put down as the model of Protestantism. She was not that : she was a thorough Englishwoman, and, like all English people, she loved a compromise. The average Englishman detests being obliged to carry out propositions to their full and legitimate conclusion. He says, "Don't be impracticable ;" and the consequence is, there is nothing in this country that is logical, if by "logical" you mean that the conclusion which is the natural result from the premisses has been *arrived* at. No, no ; we like a little of this and a little of the other. Our foreign critics have laughed at us ; we are mocked at all over Europe for our love of compromise. Well, it is our little weakness, and it has also been our great strength ; for, whilst other nations have bled to death from inability to get any government that would square with their notions of the eternal realities of justice, we put up with *this*, and we bungle on with *the other* ; and of course we speak well of the bridge that carries us over, though it may not be built on the true principles of the ellipse. Elizabeth was a downright Englishwoman in that respect : she was never very bigoted either one way or other. Her persecutions for religion were persecutions for politics, and she distributed them very fairly. She liked fat Papists and Protestants with fine impartiality, because she didn't care much for their little non-

senses of theology. One point in her creed was—"I, Elizabeth, by the grace of God, do rule over these realms," and if Papist or any one else gainsaid her supremacy, her remedy was, "Off with his head." If you think her actions in these matters arose from any great or deep principle, I don't agree with you. She was a compromise herself, and she compromised in religion. It is a very easy thing to say "black is white, and white is black," but to say it in such a way as to appear to be saying the contrary, is the great secret; and Elizabeth's diplomacy, though of this kind, must be regarded as a series of subtle works for the promotion of great and glorious ends. A great compromise that answer of hers when they wanted to test her as to her belief in transubstantiation. She was like those wonderful Samaritans we read of in the Old Testament, of whom it says, "They served God *and* worshipped graven images;" they had a foot in both countries. And that is a good plan, you know, because then, whichever party gets to the top, you have only to go over with your other leg.

Her sacred Majesty an out and out Protestant! I don't believe it. Look into her chapel and see the crucifixes and candles! See the Romish pictures in her private rooms. Remember how she detested the marriage of the clergy, and what trouble poor Archbishop Parker had to induce Her Majesty, as head of the church, to allow these persons to marry. Oh, she turned from it with a shudder, and the Archbishop says, "I was in horror to hear such words to come from her mild nature and Christian learning, as she spoke concerning God's holy ordinance and institution of matrimony." Lord Burleigh—you know how wise a man he was; no wiser man ever walked in Old England—persuaded her to connive at the marriage of priests. But the Queen very nicely drew the line. "If these persons marry," at last she decided, "their children shall not be legitimate." And it was not till the reign of James the First that a statute was introduced by which the children of the clergy were made legitimate. Elizabeth conformed for her own safety; when it was necessary as a matter of policy. The fact is, she was both indifferent and intolerant, and those who know human nature thoroughly are aware that these two things *can* sometimes go together. Did she care what the people believed? Not at all; provided they believed in "Good Queen Bess," and in her "right divine." But however much she may in private have inclined to-

wards the old church, yet in public, and when the question was to be decided for old England, in all external acts she was thoroughly Protestant, Protestant to the last, and was always looked to by Protestant nations as the champion of their cause.

To her glory be it said Queen Elizabeth was not ambitious of extending her dominions. She first set her own house in order. She knew full well the meaning of setting house to house and land to land, so that there was no room for the poor ; * and, therefore, she minded well her own country : otherwise she might have had the allegiance of nearly all the Protestant States in Europe. There is one act of her reign, however, that I cannot palliate, or regard with patience, and that is the measure adopted for the suppression of the Irish Rebellion. If I were an Irishman I am afraid I could never forget or forgive the wondrous wrongs and injuries inflicted on Ireland in those times. It was a war of extermination, and one of a fierce and savage description. If you want a ground on which to censure or condemn Queen Elizabeth, take the Irish war, and you have plentiful cause of sound abuse. Have done with your cant about Mary Queen of Scots, and look to that fearful period of Irish history, when £500,000 were spent in overcoming the Irish people. So bloody and exterminating was the character of the war, that three children, it has been recorded, were found feeding on the dead body of their mother.

One thing I admire Elizabeth for is that she had such great ministers about her. "No wonder," people say, "that her reign was brilliant and successful, when she had such great ministers for her counsellors." But did you ever know a fool of a ruler, or a rascal of a ruler, draw wise men, in preference, to him? I never did. There is one law in this world that is never broken ; "Birds of a feather flock together." Could Elizabeth draw great counsellors by any force but that of natural attraction? She did get them about her, and she well knew how to keep them. Look at Burleigh, that great statesman ! He was a man of comparatively low degree, and yet she knew his wisdom. She never let anybody fool her about him ; she never snubbed him ; to him she was humble. He was the only man that that proud woman could bow to ; but he *was* a man ; he had the best brain of any man in his day, and when he nodded his head, men knew that it nodded with

* Isaiah v. 8.

the secrets of his wisdom and the largeness of his statecraft. Sometimes he got in a passion with her; she bore it. If he rebuked her, she was contrite. He was the only man she ever allowed to sit down in her presence; and she said to him, "My lord, we make much of you, not for your bad legs, but your good head." When Burleigh was sick, she went to see him; and when he left her, offended, she wept, and wooed him to come back by some of the playfulest letters she ever wrote. When she went to see him, his door was low, and she had to stoop. His servant said, "Your Majesty must stoop," and the proud blood of the Tudors was up in a moment, but she bethought herself, and said, "For your master's sake I will;" and down went that noble head. Why? Because there lay upon a couch of sickness the man who was the sheet anchor of her time, the wisest man that ever ruled this good old English State. Do you wonder, then, when she understood graciousness so thoroughly, that the people loved her?

But the time to see Queen Elizabeth is at that trying time for all greatness—a great emergency. In trying times, little people, you know, faint and have hysterics; and other little people rush about, generally and promiscuously, ridiculous and useless, screaming or in a rage. But in emergencies the true heart, rising with the occasion, calms as the storm rages; the louder the thunder the quieter the true heart beats. If I judge this mighty monarch by this rule, she comes out proudly triumphant and glorious. Taking as a grand illustration of this phase in her character, her conduct during the celebrated week known in history as "the Armada week," her courage and greatness then displayed itself. For that great day in English history, that splendor of our glorious annals, is when Spain made its last effort of haughty bigotry and insolent pride, and sent its army to crush this little island of God's love. Where were your little people then? Remember, there were not many more people in all England then than there are in the three metropolitan counties now. We are monstrously apt to forget how few there were of brave old English hearts at that time. Sometimes you find people marvelously ill-informed on homely topics, although enormously clever in showy accomplishments. I sometimes ask young people, when they have just come from school or college, "Did you ever hear of Queen Elizabeth?" "Oh, yes." "And of the Armada?"

“Oh, certainly.” “Now, how many grown-up men were there in England in the year when we fought the Spanish Armada?” “Oh, oh!” They don’t know. “Well,” I say, “what was the national revenue in the year when we fought the Armada?” They don’t know: Mr Hume didn’t mention it. “Then,” I say, “what do you know about the battle, if you don’t know the height and the weight, and the size of the men who fought it? Can you judge? What is there in the history of David and Goliath, if you do not know that the haughty challenger was a giant, and Israel’s brave champion a stripling? And what do you know about the Armada, if you do not know that Spain was a Goliath, and that it was only our few millions of people, at a time when the nation had but a paltry revenue and but a handful of men, that makes that struggle one of the grandest recorded in history?” When Spain came up against us, was the Queen frightened? Not at all. She rose with the rest of the nation, and towered above the storm, and showed her ability to guide the ship of State in the face of the violent tempest. With masculine courage she went down the river and reviewed her little army at Tilbury, and, “walking through the ranks,” says the old historian, “with truncheon in hand she wonderfully encouraged all of them, and by her presence amongst her soldiers inspirited them.”

And you remember when the danger was great, she made an appeal to the country, and the nation nobly answered it. London was first appealed to for fifteen ships and five thousand men, and the old chronicler says that, two days afterwards, the Londoners humbly entreated the Council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to Queen and country, to accept *thirty* ships and *ten* thousand men. What do you think of a Queen that can elicit *that* spirit from a nation? They gave her *double* for all that she asked, and the old chronicler says (some of you will like to hear it, and you are quite right), “Even as London, London-like, gave precedent, the whole nation kept true, rank and equipage.” Out of every little cove of Devonshire and Somersetshire, the ships crept up to wait for the great army. The English spirit was lively; the people were upon their mettle.

Elizabeth was the greatest patriot this world ever knew. She called her enemies the enemies of her God, her creed, and kingdom. She breathed into this nation, so little and poor then, such

a soul and life and cheerfulness, as made all hearts rejoice. And then she delivered that speech of speeches, in the land of lands, at the time of times, the hour of hours, the darkest and the brightest hour that England ever knew. The historians have put this speech into Her Majesty's mouth. I don't suppose that any reporter was present: and we know that speeches are put into great people's mouths, which sometimes may be a little different from the speeches they make; but if she did not make that great speech, at all events it is the sort of speech, you may depend upon it, that she *would* have made upon such an occasion; and if it does not stir your hearts when you hear it read, it will show that you have become degenerate, that you have lost the right nobleness of the old heroic spirit, and that the pettinesses of modern times have eaten away the heart out of old England.

Listen:—"My loving people, we have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear; I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects; and, therefore, I have come amongst you at this time, not as for my recreation and sport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all—to lay down for my God, for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know that I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart of a king—and of a King of England, too—and think it foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm! To which, rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, the judge and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already, by your forwardness, that you have deserved rewards and crowns; and we do assure you, on the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you. In the meantime, my lieutenant-general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded more noble or more worthy subjects. Nor will I suffer myself to doubt but that, by your obedience to my general, by the concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous

victory over those enemies of my God, my kingdom, and my people."

To this speech the soldiers replied:—

" We will not change our credo
For Pope, nor book, nor bell ;
And if the devil come himself,
We'll drive him back to hell."

(That is simply and perfectly scriptural, you know—" Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.") And they would have done it, and we would have done it too.

You know what became of the Armada. Thanks to the storm, as well as to the valiancy of our seamen, it was broken to pieces, and scattered with wind and wave. Every headland and bay of our coast was covered with its finery, like the rags of a dandy lost in a furze bush. Its annihilation was completed, as it were, by the hand of Heaven itself. The battle was taken out of the hands of men ; and God's terrible winds and storms scattered the proud Spaniards, and drove them to the uttermost parts of the sea.

The Queen, as soon as it was over, went to St Paul's in state, and there, on her bended knees, before her people, gave heartfelt thanks to Almighty God for His wonderful deliverance wrought to her and to her people ; while Spanish heads hung on the battlements of the Cathedral.

Do you wonder that the people worshipped her? I do not ; for of all things the people most admire a monarch between whom and themselves there is no gap, no difference of sympathy, one whose heart is beating always in unison with the nation's. Oh, this was a king indeed ! And there have been few like her, before or since. Watch her at this Armada crisis ; admire her pluck, her cool courage, her invincible spirit, her thankfulness when it was all over, her glorious thanksgiving. All these things will show you how the people came to love her until they called her " Good Queen Bess."

" But her faults ? " Oh, faults, she had endless faults ; but her virtues were in such force ! She knew her people, and she loved them ; she ruled them, and she stood by them. She knew that Europe hated her, and she knew that her throne was shaky, and she determined to steady it, and she did—and it has never been

overthrown yet, and it stands the strongest throne in the world even now. After I have allowed for all her nonsense and feebleness and vanity, I turn to the list of kings, and I look down the book of chronicles to boot, and what do I see? Six or seven great men, and that is all; and amongst the noble heads this is the noblest.

Some of you think I am going to shirk the difficulty of Mary Queen of Scots; and if I had gone away without speaking of this matter, you would very likely have said I was afraid to approach it. Well, Mary Queen of Scots—what have you got to say in favour of Mary Queen of Scots? “Oh, she was a very beautiful woman.” Well, I grant it; moreover, I wish I had seen her. “Then, she was a very unfortunate woman.” Certainly; and I will add, for your benefit, that she was a very wicked woman. It is past all doubt that she was this. The Scotchmen themselves have had to give her up on this point. She was guilty of murder and adultery, and a few other matters of that kind. But, because she was such a beautiful woman, there is a parcel of sentimental nonsense talked about her, and Queen Elizabeth is blamed for her misery, and Queen Elizabeth’s character is blasted because of her execution. Mary’s pretty face has, in the opinion of many, blotted out her crimes. As old Sir Charles Napier has said, “Women are such jolly good fellows that it is difficult to believe anything bad of a pretty one.”

Of Mary Queen of Scots it may be said that some of her qualities were admirable; but her vices were plentiful, terrible, and mountainous in their extent. Why, if some poor creature living in the next street were only guilty of a tithe of her crimes, the puritans of to-day would not tolerate or forgive her; they would gather up their robes of righteousness around them, treat her with scorn, and turn away. But this Queen—this woman dipped in vice, cherishing an unholy ambition, with a pride as great and as vile as her harlotry, one of the foulest spots in history—she must be excused, pardoned, commiserated, sainted, because of a pretty face, pretty behaviour an hour before death, the giving away of a crucifix, taking of the sacraments, and all the other (very admirable in their way) ceremonies usually attendant in those days on a public execution. What have we to do with such things? If I spend sympathy on a sinner, it shall be on a

living one. Why, not one of you who defend Mary Queen of Scots would have touched such a woman with the tips of your fingers if she were living ; but now she is dead you seek to white-wash her with the extinct graces and worn-out glories of a past age, and with a beautiful thread of romance you think to dim her vices and cover her iniquities. Her own countrymen have not been able to absolve her, and shall we do so in England? No. It is for God alone to take to Himself the penitent thief upon the cross by way of holding out hope to the sinner even at the eleventh hour ; but it is no part of man's duty to say that a lady-like death, an angelic smile, a sweet prayer, sacrament taking, and pretty dying shall wipe out a life of lies and iniquity.

Do you know who Mary Queen of Scots was? The beautiful banner-bearer of Obscurantism and Popery, backed by the Guises, the most detestable family in Europe. Between them they meant to roll back the light that Luther had spread over the nations, and without doubt, if Mary could have had her way, she would have blotted out all that is great and glorious in our land ; she would have closed the Bible, shut out the light, undone the Reformation, and damned Luther, and consigned all the things that Reformers have been valuing, with all their liberties, to perdition. And you worship her. "Oh, she was a very beautiful woman!" But for this, people would have recognised her true worth—or worthlessness. It is wonderful how these beautiful women do fool us ; but they don't fool me in this particular. I look at the two women, and I say, "Hook-nosed Elizabeth for me!" I have looked at her rival, seen her beauty ; but I look at her heart, and in spite of her beauty, I thank God she did not win.

"Oh, but it was a very terrible thing to behead her!" Yes, but what were they to do? Why blame Elizabeth for the beheading? She was against it at first. She was the very last of monarchs to have played tricks with monarchy ; for the "divine right" theory was very strong in her. Who were the men that consented to Mary's death? The grave, white-bearded, old statesmen of England ; they were the ones who did it. I do not altogether justify Elizabeth's treatment of Mary ; it was not womanly, and nobody ever said it was ; but when Mary quartered the arms of England on her shield, and disputed the succession to the throne, what could Elizabeth do? When Mary

threatened to involve the country in civil war, it ceased to be a quarrel between the two women, and became a grand question of national policy; it was a question whether England should be Protestant or Catholic, and whether she should be overrun with the Guises. Mary was guilty of treason—of intense, intentional, hearty, thorough treason—against the well-being and safety of the land. She was a pretender, and she was a pretender who was backed by the unscrupulous enemies of England. As long as she lived, our enemies had the focus of insurrection, and her death was thought virtually necessary to the stability and peace of England. I suspect that, if she had been a man, nobody would have made any fuss about it; but they pity her because she was a woman. But no blame to Queen Elizabeth for her death. She stood out against it as long as it was possible. Blame Walsingham, blame the great *people* of England if you like; but no blame to Queen Elizabeth, who reluctantly consented. It was a sad necessity. Mary was an intriguing woman, and there was no safety for England as long as she was there. Though I mourn the necessity, I throw myself into the spirit of those days of terror and of seeming darkness, and my soul is with the hook-nosed Queen; for I do so passionately value the freedom of this land, that I count even the life of a beautiful woman worth sacrifice, rather than that our glorious liberty should have been imperilled for a moment. I may be wrong. I am a crusty old man, and have got past my romance, but I prefer liberty to the prettiest woman I ever met; and if Queen Mary meant mischief to this dear old realm, I say, "Let her look out!" "But did not the church bells ring when Mary was executed?" Do you think that the men of the age of Shakespeare, and the men of the age of Sidney, and of the age of Walter Raleigh, in the days of gallantry and chivalry, of woman-worship and adoration—do you think that these men were brutes? *Why* did they ring the bells? Because a woman was dead? because a queen had been beheaded? Never, never. But for this reason—that danger was gone, that the land was safe, the rock of offence was removed, the stone of stumbling was gotten away, and the path of old England seemed to lead clear into the great wide realms of liberty and freedom—freedom of thought and of speech. So these gallant fathers of ours rang the bells, although the sad occasion

was the death of a beautiful woman. We may pity the unhappy fate of Mary, but let not that pity induce us to commit the great mistake of making amiable dying compensate for unholy living.

The bead-roll of Elizabeth's many virtues would take years to tell; but you have heard my tale, and now we must come to the sad, sad scene where the aged queen lay dying, but scorning to be laid upon her bed. As to Elizabeth's death, there are two sorts of stories about it. Some people make her die broken-hearted. I do not believe this. I think she died because she was tired of it all. And her death is very noble, very grand, if we look at it rightly. Some say she died for love of Essex. Well, we shall not be angry with her if she did. Why not? What harm? But as she lay dying there, how the old lion woke up at times in the woman's heart, and how the true devotedness came out as she asked them to move her nearer the window, that she might hear through the lattice the peal of the organ and the chanted psalms of the church, to which, after all, she had been true, through all her follies and vanities! What a rebuke to greatness is the sad end of that great queen! Almost alone, neglected and forsaken, almost forgotten, she lay like some grand old Scandinavian of past ages, whose Norse blood rebelled against the idea of dying on a bed. They lifted her up with cushions, a little higher and a little higher, and still she refused her bed. Where were her courtiers then? They had left her, and had gone to the North, to look after the rising sun there, that first of the eminent blessings which the Scotch bestowed upon us—James the First, the Scottish Solon who had the honour of introducing the race of Stuarts to the English throne. While they were doing this, the great, grand, stern, ascetic, austere old Queen, disgusted with the world, and finding that after all it was but vanity, took days and days to die. When asked who should succeed her, she replied, "None but a king." She died at last sadly, but gloriously and nobly, leaving Old England so full of power, courage, and patience, that the words which Shakespeare put in the mouth of Cranmer, and which one may almost term a prophecy, were fulfilled almost to the letter, and have become matter of history.* She had blessed the land; truth did nurse her, and she grew strong in it; liberty flourished under her; her own did bless her;

* King Henry the Eighth, Act v., Scene 4.

her foes did shake like a field of beaten corn, and got well thrashed afterwards ; Englishmen did eat in safety, and God was truly known in her days. She had kept up the old spirit, and her ministers and people had gathered round her in love as round some mighty mother. She was loved by all good people, feared by the bad, and disliked by the frivolous.

Some of you may again read, and with more thought, the reign of that great Queen, and you may then meditate upon the sweetness and familiarity of the dear old name. She gave titles and honours where she found truth, talent, courage, and integrity ; and she never chose fools for her counsellors. She may be said almost to stand alone among England's monarchs. Two exceptions will I claim—Alfred, “the truth-teller,” the immortal Saxon ; and the stout-hearted puritan Huntingdonshire farmer, Cromwell—and they might bear her company for life. If she faltered for a moment, those two might put their arms towards her, and with the pious Alfred and the stalwart Cromwell she would never stumble or fall.

I trust you have seen enough of her excellences to make you understand why this nation revered Elizabeth, in spite of her imperious temper and her small spirit in some things. In spite of her eminent foibles, her marvellous weaknesses, if Queen Elizabeth be rightly judged, you will agree with me that she amply deserved the sweet familiar title of “Good Queen Bess ;” and I do say that that title is one of the noblest that ever a nation bestowed upon a monarch.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

BORN 1545. DIED 1596. (FROM 36TH HENRY VIII. TO
38TH ELIZABETH.)

OUR subject this evening is the life and doings of that brave old "sea-dog," Sir Francis Drake, one of the earliest of our great sea-captains, the first freebooter who showed the way to the treasure-house of the Indies, our first circumnavigator of the globe, and one of the chief agents in the humiliation of Spain and the destruction of the Armada.

As usual, I presume you have a large acquaintance with English and other history, so that you will be able to supply the background upon which I shall, of course roughly, paint. So long as that old and, in its day, celebrated work, "The Buccaneers," was a school-book in general vogue, the name and exploits of Sir Francis Drake were familiar to every schoolboy; but whether we have grown better or wiser, or whether other subjects of a more important kind have gained prominence in present times, certain it is that Drake is, to almost every Englishman, very little more than a name. Time would fail me to give anything like a lengthy description of this characteristic Englishman's story. I hope, however, to be able to show that a better, braver, or more plucky sea-king never came from Scandinavia.

The old international laws were marked by curious ideas of right and wrong. Piracy was considered quite a gentlemanly occupation; and if a Scandinavian king had two or three sons, he would give them each a good ship and his blessing, promising them his curse if they were cowards enough to die in their beds. A man was at liberty to fight with anybody he liked at sea; and such were the rough, unceremonious, hard-fighting times in which the lot of Drake was cast.

If, however, you are going to measure Drake by a tea-table standard, I must confess that his character will be at once con-

demned. For my own part, I cannot justify all that Drake did ; but I think that much may be excused when viewed as it ought to be viewed—*i.e.*, in connection with the times in which he lived. His merits are great : it was he who first found his way to the East Indies, and laid the foundation of our subsequent dominion there ; it was he who put the first English fort in Oregon, and that formed our right and title to that tract of country ; he was the main conqueror of the Spanish Armada : he was, to use his own quaint language, the singe'r of the King of Spain's beard—and he gave it such a singeing that it has never grown properly since.

Drake lived at one of the turning-points of English history. He combined in himself the knight-errant, the buccaneer, and the bagman. It is difficult to understand which suited him best—to be hard fighting, or to be getting something, though he seldom fought for nothing. It was during the reign of Elizabeth, that most glorious king that perhaps this country or any other has ever had—for, though a woman, one hardly thinks of her as a woman. She possessed all a man's strength, and very little of man's nonsense. She had one of the most courageous hearts and glorious of spirits, and that glorious gift in stormy times, a *quiet* heart. The majority of people are useless at such times, and exhibitions of fright and fear are all they can contribute ; but the strong hearts of the world grow quiet when the storm is loudest.

Queen Elizabeth had about her the greatest of great men. She had Bacon for her philosopher, Shakespeare for her dramatist, Spenser for her poet, Drake for her sailor, and a score of others as good as they to help her. And that right royal king was honoured by them all. Lord Bacon says, "She was the wisest person I ever met with." People run after Mary Queen of Scots, but I always feel a savage pleasure in glorifying her rival. Pope Sixtus said that if he were to marry her, there would be a second Alexander the Great born. She was the supremest person in Europe of that day. It was during this reign that that great, rough, strong, brave, covetous, fierce man Drake lived.

In those days international law was only just growing into existence, and nations at peace on land used to prey upon everybody on the sea. I am not defending anything ; I am only telling you about Drake, and endeavouring to show you that Drake had not your superior advantages, and therefore we cannot

try him justly by the same standard as you should be judged by. A man's rightful powers are the accepted principles and customary forms of his own time. Drake was one of the most typical of Englishmen; and remember, when he went round the world it was in a little ship that some of you would not trust yourselves in upon the Reservoir. In this little ship this mighty man made voyages which would frighten some of you to undertake in the best ships of our modern times.

Francis Drake was a man of low degree, but he could not help that. He was born in 1545, near Tavistock, in Devonshire—which, by the way, is the old heroic county of England—and was the eldest of twelve sons. His father, though rich in children, was poor in purse. He was a poor Protestant parson, an out-and-out Devonshireman. Now, he, being a Protestant, got into trouble in Devonshire. He could not subscribe to the Six Articles Act, which was an Act, as its royal framer* styled it, "for abolishing diversity of opinion." The Act did not succeed, however, and none but fools desired that it should succeed; for no Acts can effect the bringing in of uniformity of opinion.

Francis Drake, the eldest of a large family of sons, got very little education, except what Dame Nature and his school dame supplied him with. He accompanied his father in his wanderings, and we find them both at Upnor, on the Medway. There his father got a place among the seamen in the King's navy, to read prayers to them. Thus, as Thomas Fuller quaintly says concerning Francis Drake, "He was born in Devon, brought up in Kent, God dividing the honour betwixt two counties, that one might have his birth and the other his education." Poverty compelled the early apprenticeship of Francis to the master of a small barque trading to France and Zealand. The master of the barque was a very strict man, who believed in the old saying, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." But Drake had both

* Henry VIII. *The Statute of the Six Articles*, or the Bloody Bill, as the Protestants justly termed it. In this law the doctrine of the real presence was established, the communion in one kind, the perpetual obligation of vows of chastity, the utility of private masses, the celibacy of the clergy, and the necessity of auricular confession. Whoever denied these articles of faith was subject to be burned, or to other severe and cruel punishments. This statute was repealed shortly after Henry's death, when the Earl of Hertford was Protector.

pains and patience in his composition, and by-and-bye, when the master of the barque died, he left the vessel to Francis, who was now in a fair way to become prosperous. But he was soon tired of it, for "the narrow seas were a prison for so large a spirit, born for greater undertakings," so he sold the ship and went off to the Spanish Main. In 1567, to his ears came the news that the famous John Hawkins was going to make a voyage to the West Indies; so away he goes to join John Hawkins. Hawkins went to steal a cargo of African slaves, and carry them to the Spanish Main, and there dispose of them. He thought no shame of his traffic, nor did the folks at home, for Queen Elizabeth rewarded him by making him a present of "a coat of arms, whose crest was a demi-moor, properly coloured, bound by a cord." At Rio de la Hacha, in the Gulf of Mexico, when they arrived at the coast, Hawkins found that the Viceroy of the place had prohibited the trade; but Hawkins and Drake, not very nice about international law, and insisting upon the terms of a treaty, which they said authorised them to do so, attacked and sacked the town, and, having established a market, sold their slaves. The Viceroy, disgusted, entrapped the squadron into San Juan de Ulloa by means of a sealed agreement, and there attacked it, burned several of the vessels, and massacred many of the crew, taking others prisoners. Hawkins and Drake escaped. No doubt Hawkins was wrong; but the Spaniards were wrong too. The good old doctrine was, "Keep no faith with heretics; make any bargain." Honesty and truth were considered too good to be wasted on heretics. Unfortunately for the Spaniards, they tortured some of these English sailors under the Inquisition. Two English seamen were burned alive in Mexico and one at Seville. When the news reached England, the feelings of the people were so excited against Spain as to induce the idea of fighting her. Old England's heart took fire, and never stopped burning until it had singe'd the King of Spain's beard, since which event there has been a succession of boy kings who cannot grow them.

This attack on Spaniards forms the background of the daring exploits that marked Drake's life. He lost his venture, and determined on revenge. He was enraged at the loss of his own ship, and the treasure it contained, at San Juan; for Drake was always one who looked to the main chance. Amid all his

fighting and his chivalry he never forgot the gold and the silver: he resembled a man with two faces, the one turned towards the knight-errant and chivalric times of old, and the other towards the nineteenth century. What did he do? He conceived the idea of fighting the King of Spain single-handed, and he did it too. The Pope was going to put Elizabeth down. Drake consulted a clergyman, a sea-chaplain, who said he thought he might lawfully take it out of the King of Spain, and repair his losses upon him. Yes, that was fair; the case was clear in sea-divinity, and few of us are such arch-infidels as not to believe in a doctrine that makes for our own profit. Yes, he would take it out of the King of Spain. So this little man proclaims war upon the King of Spain. Let us see how the dwarf proved a match for the giant. He fitted out a fleet of two little vessels of 70 and 25 tons, and sailed down into the southern seas, where Spain, by virtue of the Pontiff's Bull, had a monopoly of trade. He scoured the coasts from Terra del Fuego to Mexico, attacked Nombre de Dios and Vera Cruz, burnt and pillaged various places, and made a seizure of plenty of gold. He reached Darien, crossed the isthmus, and made his way to the Pacific, and thence home. Queen Elizabeth was delighted with him.

Drake was the first Englishman who saw the Pacific. When this quaint man came to it, he was so vehemently transported with desire to navigate the sea, that, falling down on his knees, he implored the Divine assistance, that he might at some time or other sail thither, and make a perfect discovery of the same; and hereunto he bound himself with a vow. He never forgot it; and from that time forward his mind was pricked on continually night and day to perform his vow. Drake made few vows that he did not perform. The sight of the great Pacific Ocean haunted him, and he at last started on his wonderful voyage round the world in a little ship called the *Pelican*, afterwards named the *Golden Hind*, the first English keel that ever ploughed those waters. On some desolate shore he found a gibbet, "on which," he says, "I thanked God, and took courage." And why not? Some people see no reason in it, but it showed that some civilised people had been there, a people who had handed judgment and justice over to the law, who were above mere revenge; and so, when he saw that sublime gibbet, he "thanked God, and took courage."

Now, two men went out with Drake on his great expedition, and the fate of one of them is considered a terrible blot on Drake's memory. He was a gentleman named Doughty; this Mr Doughty was hung, and it has been put down as a murder. After inquiry, it seems to me that Mr Doughty was a gentleman with a long tongue; a bouncing, boasting, insubordinate person, who, because he was a partner in a limited company, was not disposed to bow down to the manager. He thought himself quite as good as Drake. Now, the deck of a ship is not the place in which to show this sort of spirit. It won't do. You cannot have a Republic on board ship. The will of the captain must be supreme, and all but despotic; and Drake is a man who will have no nonsense on board the *Golden Hind*. So some sort of court-martial was got up, and Doughty was tried. It is a strange thing to understand. He was tried and sentenced; and then, just before he was hung, he and Drake sat down, and took the communion of the Lord's Supper together. Why not? He had been fairly tried and fairly sentenced; they quite thought that Doughty should be hung, and so they broke the bread of love together. Doughty was hung, and the other went back to his ship. It was no private quarrel; but because it was an English ship—a bit of old England of which Drake was the commander—and Doughty had been braggish and noisy and insubordinate, it was agreed that Doughty should be quietly hung, and he himself acknowledged the justice of the sentence.

But there is a stranger part of the story still. Chaplain Fletcher by-and-bye turns round and begins to take Doughty's side. So Drake said, "I must put you down, but you are not worth hanging, Thomas Fletcher; you are the vilest knave that ever lived."

So Drake sits cross-legged, and summons Fletcher before him, and says to him, "I excommunicate thee, Thomas Fletcher, from the Church of God, in the name of Jesus Christ." "But Drake was a sea-captain." Certainly. But on board the *Golden Hind* this man, Francis Drake, was viceroy on behalf of the monarch who was head of the Church of England. So he said, "I excommunicate thee, Thomas Fletcher." (The Church of England is surrounded with a very prickly rim; you have got to cave in, or they won't give communion to you.) There is something droll in it—Drake perched on a barrel for an Episcopal throne—droll, but charming.

This man was a very strange person, and on board his little ship he was a king. Drake a king? Yes; and when he sat down to dinner, he had a trumpet sounded, and made a proclamation that he was going to dine. He knows the power of gold lace, and that people like to be ordered about by gold lace. At one time he puts on the black cap, and sentences a man to death; at another, he puts on short sleeves and gold lace, and proclaims, "I, Francis Drake, am going to dine." That is human nature. It is said that he was sometimes vindictive and cruel, but you would do him an injustice if you thought there was any hardness in this man. He waited upon the sick sailors with the tenderness of a woman. He was tender as a woman, playful as a child, fierce in fight, fervent in prayer, terrible when angry, soft, gentle, merciful, even tearful, if need be.

He now makes his way through the Straits of Magellan to the then unknown west coast of America. No Englishman had been there before, and he had no book to tell him what to do. He makes his way northward, till he comes to California, and goes on till he gets to 48 deg. north latitude. His men could not bear that, and they said they must go home. Well, it is arranged that the party will go home; but they won't *creep* back again. Drake determines to go boldly across the mid ocean to the Moluccas and Java. This voyage took him two years and ten months. The *Golden Hind* was the ship of ships. In that little ship of 120 tons this dauntless man sailed round the world. The big ships that are built now are vulgar, though tourists go running after them. An Italian artist once took a cherry-stone, and carved such things upon it that it was worth more than a whole row of Birmingham houses. Size, bigness, does not count for everything.

On Drake's return, special honours and marks of royal favour were shown him by Good Queen Bess. She visited him on board the *Golden Hind* at Deptford, and he entertained her at breakfast. And then she made him kneel down, and she knighted him there, and gave him a crest. Did ever king or queen do a more graceful act than that? To go down to him on board his own ship, and knight him there! The grace of it lends lustre to the act. In knighting him, that splendid woman knew that she borrowed more glory from him than she could give to him. Subsequently there was some quarrel between an old Sir Barnard Drake and him, as

to whose was the crest. The Queen boxed their ears, and then settled the question of the crest by giving Francis for his a ship in full sail, with a cable running up to heaven, as an emblem of the guidance which she believed he had had from above; and in glorious satire upon Sir Barnard, she ordered his crest to be hung upside down on Sir Francis Drake's mainsail, which much discomfited Sir Barnard.

In 1585 we find Drake gone off to Spain and Portugal. What a little people we were in those days! How many people had we then? Only a few hundreds of thousands, and our income was but small. Spain was proud and grasping. One great sea was called the Spanish Main. And now came the great fight of the world, when little England, headed chiefly by little Drake, overthrew the King of Spain. Drake visited Virginia, he took the settlers on board, and brought them home. It was a terrible time, an heroic time, a time to be remembered. For news came that there was a mighty armada coming from Spain to invade England. It was enough to shake the heart of this little people; but our fathers were not easily shaken. It was then that Drake said he should like to go and singe the King of Spain's beard. "They shall never reach England, except they swim," said Drake; and so it proved, for he utterly routed the whole of them. He went to Spain, attacked their ships, and swept away all their preparations for the armada, and secured for England a twelvemonth's breathing-time to get ready. We can excuse a man for talking loudly when he has done such big deeds. When the formidable Spanish Armada *did* come, Drake had the principal part in its defeat. The story was told that Spain's mighty fleet was really coming. The very names of the ships and the names of the men that commanded them were enough to have taken the breath out of old England. But Drake was equal to it. A strong man, when he has done all he can, is calm and quiet, though the storm is near. He shaved himself, and quietly got ready. Shaved? Certainly. Shaved on the morning of the battle? Yes; and when he had finished his rubber he went into a boat and got on board his ship. This man's practised sailorship perhaps saved England. Drake, true to his instincts, fixed his practised eye upon the treasury, and said, "We will have that ship." He gave hard blows for hard gold. He attacked the big ship; but *they*

couldn't get at *him*, you know, he was so small. However, it ended in his taking that ship and bagging that gold. One big Spanish ship yielded without a blow when the commander found that he was summoned to surrender by the terrible Drake. Thus he utterly annihilated the Spanish Armada. Queen Elizabeth was fearfully stingy. Her cry was always "Give, give." Her sacred Majesty never paid to-day what she could put off till to-morrow, and the poor sailors could not get paid. These English sailors had to be paid for drubbing the Spaniards with Spanish money.

And now Drake goes away on his last and unfortunate voyage to the West Indies. He wants to have another touch at Spain. It was on this voyage that poor Hawkins and Drake quarrelled for the first time. This preyed upon the tough old seaman, and he sickened and died. And soon after that, Death touched Drake, and that great old sailor died, and of course he was buried where he ought to have been buried—in the sea. There is no place like the sea to bury a sailor in. The famous verse of his old panegyrist runs thus :—

" The waves became his winding-sheet,
 The waters were his tomb ;
 But for his fame the ocean sea
 Was not sufficient room."

Besides his fame as a sailor, Drake has been brought into prominence by introducing tobacco into this country. He was boastful, fond of popularity, and a clever speaker. He had something to talk about, and knew how to say it. Some of his actions nothing can justify. There used to be many Devon peasants' tales and superstitions about him. These people, on passing Drake's house at night, used to run by it, fancying they heard the shrieks of people being murdered. These poor folk thought that some of his gold was not well come by. Of course the Spaniards disliked him ; and when Spanish brats would not be quiet, their mothers frightened them with Drake. In summing up the distinctive traits of his character, one may call him a Scandinavian viking cropped out late, with such differences as changed creed and culture may make. He had an equal love of hard blows and hard money. Glory, gold, and yarn-spinning were his delight. He ventured on trackless oceans without chart

or map, with a bold heart and fearless daring. He was patient, self-enduring, manfully pious, energetic, and of admirable pluck. He had a great dislike to opposition. Some have called him arrogant, for he had a talkative and somewhat boastful tongue. He had what Sir William Monson calls "the four principles" to further his gift of speaking—"boldness of speech, understanding in what he spoke, inclination to speak, use in speaking." Drake's arrogance is easily tolerated ; for, loud as was his bark, his bite was far worse, and his big words were never the "sauce of small deeds." He was an Englishman through and through. He was a downright good specimen of a brave-hearted, fearless, God-fearing English sailor (for with all his faults he feared God in his way) ; a man whose virtues far exceeded his faults, and whose glorious achievements blotted out what stains some of his deeds may have cast upon his fame.

ENGLAND DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

A.D. 1649 TO A.D. 1660.

[The following brief report of the first two lectures of a course on "The History of England during the Commonwealth" is only given here because it may serve as an introduction, however imperfect, to the lectures on Cromwell which follow.]

MR DAWSON introduced his subject by indicating the spirit in which such an investigation should proceed, as he considered it not his province to furnish a dry catalogue of facts or a barren array of dates, drawn into due chronological sequence, but to search after the motive power behind, which had produced great actions, and might reproduce them again; for mere knowledge, when abstracted from the principles which are laid in our common nature and evolve action, is nearly worthless. Individual life, he believed, formed a guide to the study of history, since history but records the manner in which the feelings and passions of men of a like nature were expressed under peculiar circumstances.

The lecturer confessed himself desirous of maintaining impartiality, and said that, while he would examine the events of the period under consideration by the light of modern principles, he would allow for the opinions, feelings, and circumstances of the time. He described this epoch in English history as the noblest—an epoch remarkable for the struggle which was made by all the great moving principles to be represented in the contest. The *Jewish* mind was indicated in the warlike songs of David which were chanted by the soldiers of Cromwell; the influence of the Classics was manifested in that stern and uncompromising discharge of their duty, which finds so many parallels in the history of Greece and Rome. It was the trial season, also, of religious opinions, as, in the agitation of the time, there were brought into contact

Romanists, Episcopalians, Puritans, Presbyterians, Independents, and others, all striving after success. Then, too, was arrayed chivalry against popular rights, absolutism against the Constitution, and feudalism against the freedom of the people.

Mr Dawson then proceeded to refute the views advanced by Rousseau in his treatise on "The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right," where monarchy is represented as a contract originally framed between the king and his people. The lecturer concluded one of the ablest and most eloquent addresses to which we have listened, by an examination of the "divine right of kings;" and expressed an opinion that much of the evil which had been wrought on the earth by the abuse of power, might be traced to the defective education of kings, who were taught this mischievous doctrine of divine right, and made to forget that the people necessitated kings, and not kings the people; and that for the people's interest only were kings made to govern.

Mr Dawson began the second lecture of the course by remarking that in adopting the eclectic mode of conducting the inquiry into this the most important epoch of English history, it would be necessary to introduce constitutional politics—not the local and temporary interests so commonly regarded as politics, but the wide and embracing principles which affect the happiness and national well-being of the whole people—a class of politics which, rightly understood, had their foundation in religion, and, like religion, had for their chief end the improvement of mankind. Many writers upon this portion of our history start with the assumption that the constitution was already fixed in the time of Charles I., whereas the struggle was partly in order to settle the constitution; and as it is impossible in a free country that it ever can be definitely fixed, the assumption is eminently fallacious.

The lecturer, having briefly alluded to the defective principles of Rousseau, proceeded to give an interesting sketch of the rise and progress of kingship. The earliest form of individual power exerted over numbers might be referred to the patriarchal age, when the head of a household became its ruler. Then, families having common interests, united to achieve their common ends, and death or other causes reducing the number of the rulers, the government of the whole became concentrated in one individual.

This widened into tribes and chiefs, until an increase of population made them nations, and their supreme ruler king. It was observed that in countries where feudalism had intervened, the monarchy became mixed; where it had not, monarchy was absolute.

The next portion of the lecture traced the elevation of the people into a political element of the State. Before they enjoyed political influence, the State differences were between the king and the nobles—the barons attempting, by lessening the royal power, to increase their own, and the king endeavouring, by weakening their authority, to extend the royal prerogative. The feudal barons or chiefs, to increase their power, sought to propitiate the inhabitants of cities and towns, by granting them certain powers of judicature; while the kings also endeavoured to secure their allegiance by confirming and extending their privileges, and strengthening the towns to resist the barons. These immunities and rights drew the population from the country into the towns; and during the quarrels between the aristocracy and the court, the people rose to be a recognised portion of the State. The king and nobles then becoming alarmed at the increasing power of the people, gave up their “ancient quarrel,” and made common cause against them. This alliance has been chiefly supported by a standing army, and by the church, the dignitaries of which, being of the aristocracy, and having power over their subordinates, have almost always ranked on the side of the king and the nobles.

Charles was then described as attempting to take from the people many of the political privileges which they had received from his predecessors, one of the most important of which was the right of the Commons to receive and appropriate the public revenue of the country; and taxation, therefore, was one of the immediate causes of bringing about the crisis which accomplished the revolution and established the Commonwealth. Charles found himself engaged in war—a war which the parliament had stimulated—while the funds were inadequate to carry it on with spirit. The Commons voted a supply, but it was not sufficient. He demanded more, but they refused unless he would consent to discuss their rights and adjust the differences existing between themselves and him. The king threatened; the Commons re-

mained inexorable. Recourse was then had to "benevolences" and "loans." Loans they were not, since they were demanded by the King, and those who refused were imprisoned. These extreme measures, however, alarmed the King, who dismissed the prisoners upon their petitioning for release. But five gentlemen refused to accept liberty unless discharged by the laws of the country. Charles consented to this appeal, and the prisoners were liberated on the ground of unjust imprisonment. They had been detained contrary to the written law, but in conformity with the law of usage or common law.

Mr Dawson then adverted to the benefits of the Habeas Corpus Act; spoke of the withdrawal of confidence from Charles by all parties in consequence of his duplicity; pointed out the evil counsel of the queen; and in criticising the opinion of D'Israeli, that "Charles was a martyr to direct taxation," showed its falsity. He brought this able and instructive lecture to a close by passing a bright eulogium upon the character of the Puritans, commending the noble conduct which marked their course throughout the great struggle, but reproving their strictness, which, upon the "pendulum" principle, appears to have been adopted as the farthest from the follies and guilty excesses with which they were surrounded.

THE FOREIGN POLITICS OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

(1649—1658.)

THE day has long gone by when it was necessary to vindicate to Englishmen who read and think for themselves, instead of slavishly following the cuckoo cry of men of the Restoration, the character of Cromwell from the aspersions and many misunderstandings under which it lay—misunderstandings which arose because it was to the interest of these men to cry down one in whose presence they felt their own dwarfdom.

In reference to his foreign politics, we shall find Cromwell a very old-fashioned man indeed. I look at him with more interest in these times; for now when there are not many great men living, it is well to go to the great men dead. Cromwell carried into foreign politics the peculiarity of his English politics. He had one great determining principle as to what he should do—and that was, to do that which he counted *right*. He read his Bible, from which he drew the true polity for the Church, and out of that polity he deduced a true polity for the State. The Puritans in those days tried to govern here and abroad on Bible principles.

They set up duty, honour, and right, above expediency or prudence, or that regard for vested interests which in subsequent times has made so large a part of political science. The consequence was that Cromwell was neither ashamed nor afraid to fight at home or abroad to uphold a principle or a creed; and any battle he fought was for that purpose. It is now out of date to go to war for a creed; but in Cromwell's day it was not so: a creed was his guiding principle—believing, as he did, that Popery and slavery meant the same thing, and that Protestantism and liberty were identical. It looked so to the men of that age because they saw that whenever there went on in the world any peculiar devilry, any extraordinary cruelty, mighty iniquity, or

great shame, it was sure to be done under Papal sanction, or at least under the Papal banner. In those days, the war between the Protestant and Catholic was not over. The thirty years' war in Germany almost smoked in its ashes at that time. The trace of the armies of Tilly and Wallenstein was yet to be found in Europe. The persecution of the Vaudois came, to show that the days of Rome's cruelty were not numbered with the past. Everywhere Cromwell regarded Romanism as devilry, cruelty, and tyranny; for Romanism, in those days, kept the Holy Office of the Inquisition in full force; and if there was one thing that provoked the wrath of England, it was the Inquisition, especially as it was sometimes not nice in taking an Englishman under its merciful protection. Remembering, also, that the old hatred to Roman Catholics, arising from the attempt made by Spain to invade England in Elizabeth's time, had not gone down, and bearing in mind the insolent pretences then made by Spain to the dominion of the New World, you can easily understand how this should cause Cromwell to draw his sword for Protestantism. For God's truth, which he took Protestantism to be, Cromwell always fought.

But in his foreign politics, Cromwell was not a theoretical politician. He never tried to thrust particular forms of government upon a foreign people. Many consider that he was a Republican, or one insisting that Republicanism was the only true and proper form of government; but nowhere do we find him doing this. In reality he was not particularly nice about the form of government, provided it embodied what he considered God's truth. If he had thought that "Oliver Rex" was more charming than "Oliver Protector," then Oliver Rex he would have become; for there were then, and still are, many to whom words are great symbols. In those ignorant days, if the being king or called king would have enabled him to reign better, he would have been king.

Like Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell always kept a look-out for the good men. He entered the arena of foreign politics, then, with no desire to thrust on other countries our form of government, but with a determination to support the right wherever it was trodden down. Full of a great patriotic ambition, he knew that England ought to be the top country; he saw that Elizabeth

had begun to make it so ; he mourned over the enfeebling boobyisms of James the First, and he determined to carry out his famous boast that the name of Englishman should be as that of the Roman of old—a shield and protection against all wrong, wheresoever he might be. Even Hume has said of Cromwell, that England, under him, was a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that did well, and was never so much dreaded or so much respected. And you may be sure of this, that no man or country is much respected that is not also much dreaded. That was the state to which Cromwell brought England.

The first instance in Cromwell's policy I shall refer to will be the Dutch War, which was, probably, an unfortunate war, being Protestant against Protestant, and, according to Cromwell, an unlucky one ; but it arose, not from a Protestant question, but from a question of commerce and trade. There was a debate about the sovereignty of what were called the narrow seas. We claimed it, and we required the Dutch to strike their topsails in certain places, in sight of English vessels. There was also the question as to whether the Dutch should pay tithe for fishing within sight of the English coast. Cromwell's mind was made up that there should be no one above England. The whole of the question resolved itself into this—whether the supreme government of the sea should be with Holland or with England. Cromwell was determined it should be with England. It was the old sawyer's question of who should be the top sawyer, and as the Dutch at first would not give in, he forced them to do it. Van Tromp was nearly as good a man as Blake ; battles were fought with dubious success, but at last the Dutch had to yield. They had to strike their topsails, to pay the herring, to give up the sovereignty of the narrow seas, and to send out from amongst them Charles the Second and his crew (this latter point being demanded by Cromwell, both from the Dutch and from France. They were a set of plotters, whose desire was to raise a foreign legion, and disturb his reign ; and, therefore, Cromwell determined to have them turned out). The Dutch afterwards sank down into the quiet, mercantile, comfortable, fat, heavy-bottomed State which Holland has ever since been.

But the great and most important feature in Cromwell's foreign politics was the Spanish war. People say it was unjust, because

Cromwell sent out an expedition to attack Spanish America at a time when we were at peace at home. But this was not at all uncommon in those times. The sea was a sort of "Irish quarter" in the world; a "shindy" might be going on there at any time, and the land know nothing whatever about it. On land they might be peaceable and well disposed, while at sea the hand of the strong was the law of right. Cromwell fought Spain in America, because she claimed the sole right over America—its commerce and the Indians. Spain obtained her right from the Pope, who, when he was something, divided the world according to his sovereign pleasure. By a pleasant fiction, which was believed at the time, the world belonged to the Pope. The logic was simple: The world was God's; the Pope was Christ's viceroy; therefore the world belonged to the Pope. And his Holiness said, "I do bestow America upon my dear children the Spaniards." Whereupon the Spaniards thought that a very good claim in law. And so it was, up to the time of the Reformation; but by Cromwell, who hated the Pope as he hated the devil, the Pope's license was as little regarded as would be that of his successor at this day, if he were to say to England that he would allow us to hold our own. Cromwell said, "I was the first discoverer of America, and therefore I claim it." Spain also claimed America as the first discoverer. But jurists said this could only hold good as to parts in which they had settled. The Pope had also said there was to be no faith nor trade with heretics, and Spain acted on that principle. Debarred from trading with English vessels, Spaniards robbed them. But then came the queerest point. The history of this world contains nothing more cruel than the doings of Catholic Spain to the Indians of South America. Cromwell believed in universal brotherhood as well as the men of to-day; and John Milton set forth in a State paper the reasons for going to war with Spain. Milton justified it on this principle: "All men are brethren; therefore any great and peculiar wrong done to any part of the human race is a wrong done to the whole." "*Ergo*," said Cromwell, "wherever there is any great wrong, there go I to right, revenge, and redress the wrong." Hence he took up the cause of the Indians, who suffered such dreadful things from Catholic Spain.

By this time Spain had heard what sort of a man ruled England,

and an ambassador came to Cromwell to propose peace. Cromwell offered two conditions—freedom of commerce and freedom of thought; and would not allow any peace until Spain allowed freedom of conscience and every right. He said, “I will have no peace unless you allow every Englishman in Spain to read his Bible, and worship where and how he pleases; unless you drop your pretensions to any monopoly in commerce, and trade with England on an equality.” The ambassador refused even to send such conditions home. He said, “My master has got two eyes; one is the Inquisition, the other his monopoly of the American trade, and you ask him to put out both eyes at once.” Probably most of you will agree with me that any monster, one of whose eyes was the Inquisition, ought either to have plucked it out and cast it from him, or got someone to do it for him as soon as possible; and, as Spain would not do it for herself, Cromwell, who was a terrible oculist, said he would perform the operation for her.

The Pope’s right to bestow was good enough when the people believed in him, but when they ceased to have faith in him he was an impostor. Cromwell declared that if an Englishman lived *in Spain*, he should have his Bible; but Spain had refused to allow them *in their ships* to have the Bible, and therefore Cromwell was perfectly justified in going to war with Spain. There was another thing that embittered the feeling betwixt the two nations. Ascham, one of our ambassadors, had been murdered in Madrid by English Royalists, and in vain had Cromwell asked that the murderers should either be punished or delivered up to him. He authorised the execution of a brother of the Portuguese ambassador on Tower Hill, for killing an Englishman on the steps of the Royal Exchange—which was dreadfully informal, but was a pretty tolerable example to Spain, and showed her what she should have done.

Then there was the Inquisition, which was a terrible thing to Englishmen. With the principle of non-intervention, what right had we to interfere with the Inquisition? you ask. But Cromwell said to them, “You make an arrogant pretence to commercial monopoly in America, which I deny;” and then he put forth a long list of the wrongs which Englishmen had suffered—the insolent claim to commercial monopoly, the murder of English subjects, the existence of the Inquisition, into which Englishmen had got. Going to war, therefore, with the Spaniards, Blake first

seized Jamaica, then went to Santa Cruz, blew the whole fleet into destruction, and hit Spain so hard a blow that she has not recovered from it to this day. It was England that was chosen to chastise her insolent pride, her greed of gold, her carelessness of blood, her lust of dominion, her beggarly crouching at the feet of priests, and the other rank offences and crimes that brought down on her God's curse, man's wrath, England's indignation, Cromwell's terrible hand, and Blake's swift, sharp, and mighty sword.

Cromwell did great things for England, and was the founder of its commercial greatness. He kept together liberty of thought, immunity of Englishmen, freedom of commerce, open seas, and the rights of the world to trade. I heartily justify Cromwell's great Spanish war.

Then there are his dealings with France. Cromwell did not make war on that country on any great scale. By insisting on the turning out of Charles from France, he kept peace with that country. Charles was ultimately turned out without much trouble. Mazarin, who then ruled, was a strong man, but he well knew that Cromwell was stronger; so he advised his master to give way. Cromwell drilled Cardinal Mazarin into good order, so that he dared not go contrary to his opinion. When Cromwell died, they wore their deepest crape at Versailles, knowing that a great man had gone out of existence. The most courtly court in Europe wore crape for the brewer's son! Let those who measure men's respectability by the number of coaches at their funeral, bear *that* in mind.

Now came Cromwell's favourite scheme of a league of Protestants, his most darling object. He proposed that all Scandinavia, Holland, the Swiss Protestant cantons, and the Protestant states of Germany, should make one league. At the present day it might be ridiculous to form a Protestant league; but in those days it was a necessity, for Popery would take the sword and strive to destroy the very existence of Protestantism. In Luther's days, Protestantism had to fetch Gustavus Adolphus from Scandinavia to fight. It was by terrible fighting that it won for itself breathing space in Europe. The Roman Catholics of those days meant extermination, and carried it out as far as they could, until that grand man, Gustavus, cleared such a lane, with those Swedes of his, into the heart of Germany, that Romanism had to accept realities, and chew the bitter cud, not of things as they ought to be,

but of things as they were ; and though it still claimed the whole world, and still kept on talking about its claims, it only pocketed as much as was to be got. Cromwell knew that community of creed was a real force in politics ; and, in order to bring about his darling scheme, he commenced with Sweden. For don't measure the Sweden of that day with the Sweden of this. In those days it was a first rate state, had the best of soldiers, had some of the greatest men, had got in it all the old Scandinavian fire, all the old Scandinavian honesty. It was geographically strong, and strong in Protestantism. It was ruled over by a woman, but what a woman ! Cromwell sent to Christina a man of great brain and great vanity, Bulstrode Whitelock. Whitelock thought it was deemed necessary to send him away as the opponent of the Protectorship ; but Cromwell saw he was the right man, and made him go. The result was as it has been from the beginning and will be to the end. When a very clever woman meets with a very clever man, they may contest it as long as they like, but to the wall, to the second place, the lady must go. Christina was a wonderful woman, but Whitelock was a little deeper and wiser. In those days queens got wonderful men about them ; and Christina, too, had admirable men around her. It may not be so now ; it seems to have gone out and become unfashionable. It may be that married queens are so content with what they have gotten ; but at all events, it is not as it was in the days of Elizabeth and Christina. Sweden had then such men as Oxenstiern to counsel her. Sweet flirtations went on between Christina and Whitelock, and it is known how she sent a message to him stating that she was very poorly because she had not seen him for a few days. He brought Sweden over to the side of England, and by degrees the famous Protestant league was formed.

Cromwell tried to win Denmark to his side, but she, as now, was engaged in talking about Sound dues, and could not attend to him. However, he got the Hanse towns, the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, and certain German states. This scheme of Cromwell's has been laughed at as Quixotic ; but it was bold and daring, and above prudence, because it was a piece of wisdom. The connection between liberty and Protestantism was thorough and complete. Cromwell said, " We know you Catholics hate us,

and we take our position." There was hardly a congregation in Europe that had not the shield of Cromwell thrown over it.

The Vaudois and other people came under the protectorship of Cromwell. The Vaudois, that most apostolic of all churches, had been most cruelly persecuted by the Duke of Savoy, their sweet Alpine valleys being deluged with blood in the name of Christ. When the news of the massacre reached England great excitement was created; the people took it up as their own suffering, and wonderful subscriptions were raised. England, Holland, Sweden, and the Swiss cantons remonstrated with Louis of Spain, and at last an armistice was patched up. But it did not last long; for a people who believe that no faith ought to be kept with heretics will keep an armistice as long as suits them, and no longer. Then it was that Cromwell sent his famous message: "Unless you show favour to the people of God, England's guns shall be heard in the castle of St Angelo." Was this right or wrong? The new doctrine is, that if Vaudois can be put down they ought to be put down—that if a nation can be crushed it ought to be crushed. Cromwell might have said: "Here are Vaudois on the anatomical table; if you can kill them it is clear you have a right to do so. If the fellows had deserved to live they would have lived; but as they are dead, it shows they ought to be." A fine doctrine that—"whatever is, is right!" Cromwell believed no such thing; he would have hated such political atheism altogether, as being a mere attempt to cover cowardice with the salve of conscience. If you had talked in that way to Cromwell, out would have leaped his sword, his tongue would have become eloquent, and he would have said that, according to his creed, God sent the strong men into the world to protect the weak, and that wherever there was a crying injustice being done, universal brotherhood called for the succour of the true-hearted and the brave. He said, "You sha'n't touch these Vaudois any more;" and the Duke of Savoy thought he had better not, and the Pope of Rome thought so too.

Nay, amongst other curious things, Cromwell actually got money out of Rome. In the confusion which followed the death of the King, Rupert ran off with some ships, and sold them in Roman and Florentine territories. Blake was sent out debt-collecting, and Cromwell said to him, "You go to Rome and Florence, and

call for the little accounts they owe me for those ships." Blake did go, and got the money. He made out the account for the Duke of Florence, and the Duke paid it. He also made out a little bill for the Pope, who had frequently heard of money coming from this country to his, but not of money going from Rome to England. He demurred; but Blake had not much patience, and soon got the money out of Rome, which knew there was a man in England who would not have injustice done without retaliation, and would have right and justice done.

Blake then went along the Mediterranean coast: the Dey of Tunis curled his lip at him; but Blake brought up his long boats, burnt the fleet, and brought the Dey to order. Cromwell then sent him to box the ears of the Knights Templars, and he gave them such a blow as made them mend their manners.

The principle of action with Cromwell was, that no Englishman should be wronged without justice being done to him. Cromwell's retaliatory justice followed like lightning upon wrongdoing. Was he right or wrong in this? Is that the doctrine to be followed, think you? Or should we rather, as at the present day, let our people be insulted, shut up in prison for Bible-reading, cut down in Austrian streets, and then *protocol* about it, and diplomatise over it, and take money for it, and so let the matter pass over? That is, when a man commits one sin, you are to give him the chance of committing another. That is not the meaning of the words, "If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also." If Spain chooses to say, "We will not suffer a single Englishman to enter the country," then I should recommend Englishmen not to go. But if Spain, having suffered Englishmen to take up residence in it, having fattened both upon our blood and our treasure, having had its base soil watered with the best blood of England, and acting as though the sponge were the best way of wiping out English debts—if this Spain refuse us rights of free worship and burial, such rights ought to be maintained at all risks. Look at what Spain has lately been doing. Take up the burial question of Madrid, which is not yet settled, the Spanish Government refusing to allow burial ground to Protestants, on the ground of their being heretics. Spain owes debts of money, honour, and blood to England, but has not the heart to pay them. We have watered her plains with our best

blood, we have rescued her people from the tyranny of the French ; we were fools enough to lend her money, which we cannot get paid. They are glorious repudiators. They deny us burial-ground and free worship. The better way is, either to retire from Spain or make them yield. *We* may stand it, but Cromwell wouldn't. Acting on this principle, he humbled Holland, taught France good manners, crippled Spain, shook the Inquisition, seized Jamaica, humbled the Pope, frightened pirates, and punished those who injured an Englishman. In the palmiest days of old Rome, no Roman was ever better protected than was an Englishman by Cromwell. If an Englishman did wrong in a foreign country, he gave him up to justice. But he determined that, so long as an Englishman acted right in a foreign country, he should have his Bible and free worship.

He had an immortal secretary in Milton to defend his policy. The Latin letters of Milton ought to be read by this generation ; and his prose works, especially that on "The liberty of unlicensed printing," are not read so much as they ought to be. If you read Milton well up, you will understand liberty indeed. Milton's pen, Blake's cannon, and Cromwell's character and sword, were always just behind each other.

Then came the Restoration, under Charles the Second ; and the degradation and knavery that followed partly undid the great work of Cromwell and Elizabeth. With "the blessed Restoration" things turned. Though Charles the Second could not knock down the tall work of Cromwell, yet, like a snail, he left his royal slime upon every part of it. Good, dear Charles soon had a town sold, a pension taken, our armies in disgraceful subordination to France, attempting to crush a free country. Under Charles the Second England ate incalculable dirt, was dragged through the mire, and became the laughing-stock of Europe. There was riot at home, and knavery and cowardice abroad. Cromwell fought for free Bibles, free speech, the liberty of Englishmen against the Inquisition ; he put out the King of Spain's eyes, and secured honour and respect for England. All this was the result of single-heartedness of purpose. He had but one aim—to make Old England great as the servant and champion of truth—the top nation, because it served and feared God most, and loved righteousness most.

Cromwell may be called Quixotic, but to wise men Quixotism does not mean what it means to fools. To fools it means fighting windmills, but not so to wise men. As the immortal book means it, it is the lifting of man above the miserable things of policy and of the hour, to live with and for certain things that are eternal. Cromwell loved certain eternal truths, and lived for them; but his misfortune was that he lived in the wrong age. If he had lived now he would be called by some the modern Don Quixote, being for an open commerce, against the Inquisition, for God's truth, and eternal right. He would be mad in the eyes of modern people. Certainly he had success, which is the test of merit in these days. Of all tests of righteousness, success is the one now. Succeed and you are a patriot, fail and you are a rebel. Cromwell succeeded, but he fought for great principles. He fought for things worth a man spilling blood and spending money for—not a Vienna treaty, that may begin to go to rot as soon as signed. He fought for light against darkness, for God's truth against devilry, for freedom against tyranny. Had he lived now, he would have liked nationalities and liberty. If he had come back to take the management of the Russian war he would have astonished us. He would ask Austria to hold up her hands, and tell her he didn't like the colour of them. He would bid one nation after another show whether she were such as a just and honest man might have alliance with. He would not have played one nation against another, but would go for the right; and, if necessary, it would have been with him, England against the world! He did not believe the great lie, "The end justifies the means." His end would have been noble, and his means of accomplishing it worthy of the end. Till we fight against something more dreadful than death, war cannot be justified.

In his public politics Cromwell carried out his private politics, which were characterised by simple-mindedness and single-heartedness. Terribly earnest, gloriously imprudent, marvellously magnanimous, ambitious for his country, pardonably desirous it should stand at the top, but only desirous it should do so because he thought it had most of God's truth, most of righteousness, and most of liberty in it. Such was Cromwell in his foreign policy. Every Protestant "conventicle" felt there was a mighty shield over them—they sat under the shadow of the great British oak,

though their rulers would not let them have their own vine and fig-tree. Cromwell laid priestcraft by the side of kingcraft to keep it company.

He was a man who, if he were to come back to these days, would be out of his element and out of his place. But he had the root of the matter within him. "Great liar, hypocrite, canting fanatic, psalm-singing knave, man of low ambition, vulgar buffoon," as Hume, that bigoted anti-bigot, may call him—smelling as he may of grains, and even with the signs of the brewer's tub about him to the last—nevertheless, after his vocabulary of abuse was exhausted, Hume could acknowledge that never was England so respected and feared as when under the administration of Oliver Cromwell.

THE DEATH-BED OF CROMWELL.

1658.

CERTAIN local reasons, well known to most of you, prevented any public demonstration—if, indeed, there had been any disposition to make it—on the day of days in English history, the famous 3rd of September. This year [1858] the anniversary fell upon the very day of the week on which Cromwell died, Friday. It is not for me to judge how far it was in your hearts to make that day memorable; but, as I have said, there were local reasons which interposed. However, better late than never, to call to mind that great day and that great man. If we did not do so on the day itself, better do so on any day than forget the memory of a man who was by far the greatest Englishman that ever yet lived.

You must not expect from me any flourishes of oratory, if I were capable of them, nor anything new to be said of the man, for there is nothing new to be said of him, but simply a rational commemoration of a great man—not a king, I grant, but a man who was called by a king “A base-born mechanic,” and for whose head the same king offered a great reward, though, as Castlereagh has remarked, he was never likely to get it until Cromwell was done with it himself.

Before I go on I will remind you of certain beautiful words in the WISDOM OF SOLOMON [chap. iv.]: “The memorial of virtue is immortal, because it is known with God and with men; when it is present, men take example at it; and when it is gone, they desire it; it weareth the crown, and triumphs for ever, having gotten the victory striving for undefiled rewards.” Of no man are these words more true than of Cromwell. The significance of a death-bed does not depend upon what a dying man may utter, not upon what anointing oil may be poured upon his head, nor upon what catechism comes from his lips. The death of a man must be interpreted by his life; and if his dying lips are too feeble to utter his faith, and his ghostly enemy may triumph over him, and his last words

are anything but what he delighted in in life, I trust our religion is enough to make us believe that God will not forget a life of three-score years and ten spent in the fear of Him. I should count it a small matter indeed did we not regard the last moments of Cromwell as all of a piece with his eventful and all-important life—the end of days nobly spent.

Let us briefly see who the man was, for the significance of a death-bed depends upon a clear understanding of the man about to die.

Let me congratulate some of you upon the wondrous change that has come over your understanding, and therefore your estimate—your estimate, and therefore your speech, regarding this great man. It used to be written that he was arch-liar, chief hypocrite, the mightiest self-seeking ambitious impostor. But glorified in his life by Milton, well understood by the kings of Europe, feared by them, mourned by them, well known by his contemporaries to be a great man, he fell after death, as Macaulay has said, into the hands of little men; and when the reign of the saints was over, and that of the strumpets began, one can little expect that a debauched king could find canvas large enough, or colours true enough, to paint the likeness of the stern and mighty Puritan. By degrees, however, and slowly, partly through the decline of party spirit, and partly from a better understanding of what true religion is, this man's memory is redeemed from the obloquy that has been heaped upon it. It used to be said that he was too clever a man to believe what he said, and that therefore he was a hypocrite who put on Puritan phrases to hide the hollowness of his heart, and the want of true religion. Then he was called traitor and renegade. If you look at him as a theorist wedded to one particular theory of politics, as some "five-point" sort of man with nothing but his charter; if you wish to make him some two-centuries-old Chartist, than he was a renegade. But with a practical intellect, and a robust wisdom, and a most manful desire to do the best thing that could be done without bragging of it,—antagonistic to Fifth Monarchy men and Millennarians and the like, who stood upon their transcendental tub and talked largely about what was to convert the world, he could not but be. He never stuck to particular points. He had his ideal of government, but he was a downright practical Englishman; and it was his end

and aim to govern England in the best possible way without making a noise and preaching sermons about how it was to be done. His manners were too rigid, his morals too strict, he was too Biblical in speech and heart to be understood by the Court of Charles the Second. He was a godly man, and fell among thieves; he was a godly man, judged by libertines, who feared neither God nor man. Don't say too much against Cromwell because he put down a church; don't say he was an impostor, liar, fool, because he deposed a king; for it may be asked, What sort of a church was it, and what sort of a ruler, that could be thrown down by such a man? These and such verdicts, then, are being altered, and I hope most of you whom I am addressing will agree with me that Cromwell was emphatically a man. His intellect was the most equally diffused of anybody's in history; there was a masculine robustness of mind in him (touched here and there with a little fanaticism, it is true, but it was slight); and whether we see him farming in Huntingdon, fighting at Naseby, winning at Worcester, governing in London, or dying at Whitehall, we shall find him of full-grown, robust mind, evidently born to rule, always up to the wants and emergencies of the hour and the nation, always bringing to bear upon the time a never-failing courage, and an intellect that never grew dim.

Opinions have become changed as to the theories of great men's lives. It is held by some, that the secret of getting on in life consists in drawing up a plan for the attainment of some definite object, and pursuing it resistlessly until the end is gained. No great and good man ever did that yet. It may be very well for well-to-do city aldermen to say they came to town with half-a-crown, and heard Bow Bells calling them to come and be Lord Mayors; or for men who have grubbed through by-ways, and dark ways, and dirty ways, till they have reached their ambitious ends, to sit down like successful civic Jupiters, and proudly exclaim, "Think of my opportunities, and look at me now!" But we are speaking now of another sort of people altogether—we are speaking of great and good men. The truly great man only plans first of all the eternal principles on which he will act, and leaves it to God to settle the way and the hour. He will be something—his mind is made up—a good man he will be; but what he shall strive for, what he shall get, how much he shall be "worth," as

the phrase goes, never enters his mind. Really great men have acted on this principle: "When thou art bidden to a feast, take a low seat, and sit there; by-and-by you shall be beckoned to come up higher." Whatever work that lower end finds them, they do honestly, faithfully, and truly, and in due time they are beckoned by the visible finger of circumstances, which is God's finger; and, never disobedient to the call, they advance step by step, and stage by stage, until they stand an immortal band of examples of the great words of our Lord, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things shall be added unto you." And again, "He that is faithful in few things, shall be made lord over many."

Look again at another common principle in life. In this world there is even a conspiracy against able men who are not of the right set. There are the high Brahmins and the Pariahs of society; and fageydom, stupidity, and men in possession, combine in a perpetual league to keep the strong man down. But do they ever succeed? It is very poetical and very nice to write about mute Miltons, village Cromwells, and neglected Hampdens; but what is the fact? Is it not a glorious chapter in the career of human life, that men bowed down and almost crushed by obstacles of want and obscurity, have yet worked their way to the top, until they stood—the world's masters? Depend upon it society must send for these men when they are wanted; if a thing wants doing and one man can do it, we must have him. In the time of danger and a nation's trial, we must send for the one strong man. So with Cromwell. His own quaint, blunt account of his rise is worth your remembering. "I was a person," said he, "who from my first employment was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater, from my first being a captain of a troop of horse; and did labour as well as I could to discharge my trust, and God blessed me 'therein' as it pleased Him." Seeing that additions to Lord Essex's army of some new regiments were desirable, the troops being composed, most of them, "of decayed old serving men, tapsters, and such fellows," who could not cope with, and were beaten by, the Royalist army, composed "of gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and sons of quality," he volunteered to raise some men "of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or," said he, "you will be beaten still." The result was

Cromwell went into the east and recruited the immortal Ironsides, men who were never beaten, but, as Cromwell himself wrote, "whenever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually." This act is the key to Cromwell's life. He never thrust himself into a single appointment he ever held, but was always called to fill it.

Much has been said about Cromwell's religion ; but to some of you who have been bred up in the forms of Dissent, the old language of the Puritans is familiar. To you the quaint phrases, the curious seekings of the Lord, the frequent prayer meetings, and the chanting of psalms, is not difficult to be understood. Those, however, to whom Church traditions are everything, to whom everything must come in regular established historic order, and who pray from the book, cannot understand the sturdy fanaticism with which these men march through life. Cromwell can never be understood in England, unless the whole Dissenting life of England is duly appreciated. In his days there was some of the most robust morality, some of the best God-fearing men, some of the noblest and humblest piety, some of the best wrestlings with the devil, some of the best triumphing over the flesh, and some of the most sincere religion the world ever saw. Cromwell well held that the Bible was God's book, and that it was good for disciplining the heart, ruling a house, and saving a soul ; and therefore that it was also good for fighting a battle, governing a nation, or selecting a Parliament—that it was good to leaven a state in its heart, soul, and conscience, by the true and eternal will of God. Hence it came that the Bible was often quoted in the mouths of the stern Puritans. Now-a-days, the Bible is kept for holidays ; it is living bread, it is true, but it is shew bread. But is it to be wondered at, that in those times, when it came to fighting and king-killing, when it came to Nasebys and Marston Moors, the words of the Old Testament, the histories of the fighting men of Israel, of the Prophets, of Samuel and Saul, and the denunciations of king-making and king-choosing, entered into the hearts and the speech of the Puritans? You may call it "cant," if you like. But canting means saying something we do not believe. Now, Cromwell's phrases were often grim and odd ; but before we condemn them, let us inquire whether they did not convey the real meaning of his heart.

Aided by Admiral Blake, Cromwell raised this country pre-eminently, and gave social and religious freedom to its people. He made England feared, respected, and great; always fostering the lowly, protecting always the weak. Strange, such fruit as this should grow on a bad tree! Even his enemies confessed that the fruits of this man's rule and government were the best and most glorious the world ever saw.

Cromwell hesitated, and finally refused, to take the title of king. Men have an inherent love for high names and sounding titles, for robes and scarlet, and pewter regalia. Why, then, should not a wise man hesitate before he refused a title which yet could not enhance the man, but simply add a dignity to his name? Why should he not ponder, and pause, and pray, why not wait from day to day for more conviction and more reason? At last he said, "No, I take not that title." I would have loved him less had his decision been otherwise, for it evinced practical wisdom, a noble impatience of trivialities; it was another sign of the fine, manly, emphatic intellect with which he was endowed.

Passing on to the memorable day on which Cromwell died, the Protector, in speaking of that day, said it was "a day of the year whereon from his first childhood, by the Lord's wondrous grace, up to the present time, he never had attempted aught but he had therefrom reaped a golden harvest." On that day had he fought, and won, at Dunbar, on that day did he prevail at Worcester: on that day he died. Remember the lines of one of England's greatest poets:—

"The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crowned him on the self-same day,
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.

"And showed not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass, through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb."

Let us look at the man as he drew near to his death-day. The latter part of his life had not been easy; everybody seemed to be against him. Parliament began to dispute about the right to rule and govern: his whole life had become a burden. There were

conspiracies of Republicans, Presbyterians, and Cavaliers ; threatenings of assassination ; and these, with a worn frame and a sad heart, had reduced him to a weakness that did not gradually appear. Then came that crowning sorrow, the death of his favourite daughter ; she whom to know was to love and pray for ; between whom and him had subsisted that mystic and strange affinity that sometimes lives between father and daughter ; that spiritual union which made her life seem his life, and the light of her soul and conscience his. She had pleaded for the Cavaliers where none else had dared, and he had borne from her what he could not have endured from any other. She fell sick, and he left the State and its works, and for fourteen days sat by his dying child, lost in grief, and almost overcome with sorrow ; for he was one of the world's strong men, and, therefore, one of the world's tender men. We must not waste that word "tender." It is not for the soft and habitually kind ; it is only applicable to the strong, stern, robust men of the world : it must be regarded as the water that came from the rock of Moses. What wonder that this mighty man, in losing the child of his heart, should have been shaken with a final shaking ?

Preparations were made to celebrate the 3rd of September. Oliver lay on his bed complaining that his life had been a burden, and too heavy for man. How did he spend his last days ? He called for his Bible, and desired "an honourable and godly person" to read to him a passage from Philippians. Then he said : "This scripture did once save my life, when my eldest son, poor Robert, died, which went as a dagger to my heart ; indeed it did." Reading on of Paul's contentment and submission to the will of God in all conditions, he said : "It's true, Paul, you have learned this, and attained to this measure of grace ; but what shall I do ? Ah ! poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out, I find it so !" But reading still further on, where Paul saith, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me," faith began to work, says the chronicler, and his heart to find support and comfort, and he said thus to himself : "He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ, too."

He quitted Hampton Court for London, and quitted it for ever. He thought he should not die ; prayers were offered for his recovery, and afterwards for his speedy recovery, but in vain ; his

sickness increased. Then came the last words of this man. The veil of the death-bed is a terrible one to undraw, but if a man in those moments could call for his Bible, and turn his mind calmly to eternity, he was no hypocrite. Once he was heard saying: "I was once in grace," and it has been argued thence that he had fallen from it. But was there ever a great and good man who could not look back on a brighter and purer hour? He had never held that men might sin that grace might abound; his morals were clear, and his life pure and sweet, and he had joined faith with works. He spoke a good deal of the "Covenants" of works and grace; he was heard ejaculating: "It is holy and true. Who made it holy and true? the Mediator of the Covenant." And he used also many other expressions betokening a holy and sincere soul. So, believing in God, and with the consciousness that he was beloved by God, with the eternal arms around him, he sank to rest. In the tumult of the storm that was raging on the day he died, the dying man offered up one of the noblest and best prayers ever made, praying for his people and for his enemies, and ending with one brief word for his exhausted frame—"And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen." So passed away England's great "liar," its "chief hypocrite," its most ambitious "base-born mechanic." So passed away one of the greatest and strongest Englishmen, and one of the robustest saints; and, allowing for his little fanaticisms and mixed motives, one of the truest and sincerest of men.

His body was exhumed and mutilated by Charles the Second and his profligate Court. Contrast the death of that monarch in the midst of debauchery with that of Cromwell. What were Charles's last words? They were characteristic of the man. With all his faults, he was at least a well-bred gentleman. So, said he, "I have been an unconscionable time dying." He actually asked those around him to excuse it. Thus he passed away, cheating himself to the last, as he had cheated all others; liar to the last, with the smirk of a gentleman. Can you doubt of which we may say, "This was the death-bed of the righteous?" Contrast the two, and go away with the cuckoo-cry, if you can, "Thank God for the blessed Restoration."

But we have not done with Cromwell yet. The question has arisen, "Shall Cromwell have a statue among the kings of Eng-

land?" And it has been settled to *my* satisfaction at least. Surely you would not place him beside such finished gentlemen as Charles the Second and George the Fourth! A monogamist, would you rank him with Henry the Eighth, who had several wives? Would you put a man who wore a common, shabby, country-cut coat in such company? Why, the stone George, who revelled in the fopperies of Brummell, would faint; and Henry would blush in marble! Would you send him who told the truth to associate with Charles, to whom truth was a stranger? Charles would be saying, "Noll,* tip us a song," when all that poor Cromwell could offer would be some Puritan psalm. That would sound dismal indeed; whilst even good George the Third might not feel altogether comfortable. Put him amongst kings? No, no; let him rank with the three Johns—Milton, Bunyan, and Locke. The question has been well settled; let the "base-born mechanic" rank with his order; and were he to have a new tomb, the noblest and best inscription that could be written upon it would be, "Here sleeps Milton's friend."

* Old Noll—Oliver Cromwell was so called by the Royalists. Noll is a familiar contraction of Oliver—*i.e.*, Ol', with an initial liquid.

PEOPLE'S STATUE TO CROMWELL.

(From the "Birmingham Mercury," April 7, 1849.)

"SHALL Cromwell have a statue?" Many of our readers may remember the lively and earnest occupation which this question gave to the press of England in the autumn of 1845. Throngs of "Vindices," "Clios," "Templars," "Churchmen," "Fair Plays," "Earnests," "O. P. Q.'s," &c., sallied forth to do battle in the papers over the claims of Oliver Cromwell to partake the honour destined to each of the sovereigns of England in the new Senate House, and every important journal, metropolitan and provincial, put forth its leading article to maintain or deny the right of the mightiest of all England's rulers to this national recognition of his sovereignty. Every impartial observer of the strife must allow that where the right was there was the might also; that the side of plain justice and common sense drew to itself all the ability of the country; that those who besought the committee of taste not to sin against facts, not to ignore history, not to impoverish and degrade a great national memorial, nor to refuse this recognition of sovereignty to the transcendent sovereign whom Europe and the world had with awe and admiration acknowledged—that the champions of so sound and plain a cause completely got the better of those who urged the committee to insult common sense, trample upon fact, outrage history, and imitate the stupid folly of the statute book in making over to the base reign of Charles II. the glorious years of his great predecessor.

Never did public opinion return a fuller and more unmistakable "Yes" to any query than to the question "Shall Cromwell have a statue?" The committee of taste, however, would not or dared not act upon this unhesitating "Yes," failed to interpret, or shrunk from fulfilling this clear intimation of the national disposition; and yet ventured not to refuse all honour to that injured name which the intellect and energy of England were

learning especially to honour. The committee, therefore, made a compromise—stupid, meaningless, and unsatisfactory as such compromises always are. They would recognise Cromwell, but must ignore the Protector; would make no room for him among the rulers of England, but provided him a place among the illustrious generals; conceded to the *soldier* the statue which they refused the *sovereign*; bestowed the honour where it was not demanded, withheld it where it was required; left undone the thing they ought to have done, and did the thing they ought not to have done. We are not particularly anxious to express our gratitude to conquerors, to multiply the memorials of military genius. When a great man is illustrious in more ways than one, has a vast and manifold greatness, why select his inferior greatness for honour? Besides, while acknowledging Cromwell's consummate generalship, and grateful for it, as an instrument of "the good old cause," we are the less eager to commemorate it as it was displayed against his countrymen, and feel especial reluctance to glorify the hero of a *civil* war, the conqueror of Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen.

It was for the *ruler*, the greatest of our rulers, that the statue was claimed. It was to see the legitimate series so magnificently broken, to mark among so many mock-monarchs one veritable and unmistakable king, to place among the so-styled sovereigns by right divine, one sovereign by a real right divine, the right of his own soul—to give those ruthless Normans, those fierce or feeble Plantagenets, those tyrannical Tudors, those weak, wicked Stuarts, those dull, stupid, profligate Germans, the glorifying company of this one Englishman, this solitary incarnation of English valour and persistency, English might and mercy, English morality and religion—it was to accomplish *this* that the controversy was carried on and the nation stirred. And the stir won from the committee of taste the promise of a statue for the *warrior*!

The controversy dropped; but its burden was not forgotten. Lately some inhabitants of St Ives, near which town Cromwell lived for some years in obscurity, and where prayer and meditation prepared him for his work, met to deliberate about the erection of some monument to their mighty townsman. But this is not a work for the men of St Ives alone; it must be the deed of the people of England. If the Protector is not to stand amongst the

monarchs, let the English people do what they can to repair the wrong by raising a statue to this greatest of Englishmen, and join to glorify in some worthy fashion the national hero.

Cromwell has claim to this memorial from the people of England, as their greatest expression, as the fullest and sublimest manifestation of the English character, of that calm strength, that awful energy, that unresting persistency, that sublime good sense, that moral earnestness, that intense religiousness, that erect walking by sight where such walking is required, that entire walking by faith where such is the guidance needed, which we Englishmen would fain believe to be our national characteristics, and are fond of boasting of as such. It was this mighty nature, spent in asserting the civil rights to which we cling so fondly, in vindicating the freedom of conscience we love so dearly, that lifted him so high and kept him there, and during his elevation revealed the greatness of the English character to all the world, and exalted the name of England among the nations. His was the English character idealised, dilated into divine dimensions, magnified, glorified. He yielded the sublime spectacle of strength, grandeur, nobleness of nature, gloriously manifested upon an earthly throne, humbly prostrate before the Heavenly Throne. Alas, that England should have yet to render the honour due to her own especial hero—should have yet to raise a statue to this mightiest Englishman!

But this memorial is not required merely as honour due to surpassing greatness, as a debt due to neglected greatness; it is still more imperiously demanded as reparation due to slandered, injured, outraged greatness.

“Alas! the frowning ages! full o’er thee
Has swept the slander of each century.”

England more than forgot Cromwell. She has been ashamed of her greatest; has denied, disowned, cast down, insulted her hero; has magnified the small affair of 1688 at the expense of the mighty business of 1642; has exalted her Dutch deliverer to revile her own English redeemer; and fondled the puppet monarchs whom she fetched in her need from Germany, to trample on her own born King, her own mighty Protector, who arose in her sore extremity to guide and govern and glorify her. The base and impotent revenge of the wretched Royalists, in tearing from the

grave and fixing on a gibbet the illustrious corpse, has not been nationally mourned or publicly atoned for. We demand this statue, as a solemn recantation of the slander, as some expiation of the sin, as a witness that England has regained her soul, has learned at last to admire her greatest, revere her noblest, love her best.

And last, but not least, this honour is due to Cromwell as a champion of "the good old cause," as a man who fought for nobler ends than did ever warrior, and ruled with higher aims than did ever sovereign. No one cast more aspiring glances towards the future, more devoutly believed in a better time to come. The present age is beginning to learn that the *progress* which it calls for is indeed that "good old cause" for which he prayed, and worked, and fought, and reigned. Let this age, then, express its own aspirations and endeavours in this statue, whereby it would utter its gratitude to this great hoper, this mighty worker.

We would have no time lost in stirring up the country to this long deferred act of justice. Let a society be formed at once in every important town for collecting contributions; when a sufficient fund is raised, let a sculptor be immediately engaged; the place where the statue is to stand can be fixed while the work is on hand. Could a site be procured there, London, of course, is the proper abiding-place of so national a monument; after the metropolis, Huntingdon, his birth-place, or Naseby field has the next best claim to entertain the memorial of him. And then, on some smiling, fragrant, flowery April 25th, his birthday, or on some sunny and glorious June 14th, the day of Naseby fight, or better still, on some soft, bright September 3rd, his own fortunate day, the day on which he so signally prevailed over men, the day whereon he passed to God, let the lovers of "the good old cause" gather together from all parts of England to inaugurate the statue, and to hail in this national recognition of their hero the certain triumph of the cause so dear to him and them.

ADMIRAL BLAKE.

BORN 1598. DIED 1657. (FROM 40TH ELIZABETH TO 8TH CROMWELL.)

EITHER the principles of the old English Commonwealth and Puritanism had in them some marvellous power to bring out great men, or had great luck in bringing out the best men the country could give, to do its work in the best way. It had its Cromwell, a soldier; its Blake, a sailor; its Milton, a poet-statesman. But, leaving you to settle how it was—whether it was a question of luck, or the inspiration of commonwealth principles—I want to bring you to know something of one of the most neglected of old soldiers and sailors that this old land of ours ever had. That is Robert Blake.

He belonged to a west country family, and was born when the west of England was in its glory; when Bristol was what Liverpool is now. Blake's ancestors appear to have been country gentlemen, but one of them—Humphrey Blake—turned merchant. He left Bristol and went to Bridgewater, where he set up vessels, and became what is well termed a merchant adventurer. They had then to fight as well as sail. Piracy in that day was a gentlemanly fashion. It is only in times like this that the fashion has changed. The merchant of that time piloted his own ship, looked after his own enemies, ran the risk of being sold in Barbary, or to hear a tune in Tunis; and if he escaped these chances he did tolerably well. Well, such a man was Humphrey. He had a large family, and at the tail of them came Robert.

Robert Blake went to Bridgewater School, and, being of a very quiet and studious turn, he was passed from school to Oxford. Whilst he was at Oxford, he was famed for being pious, devout at prayer, and a strong lover of field sports. A man to be devout, now, must be—I won't say what; but it is impossible in these days to be anything like pious and be fond of sport. They had not got the fiddle-faddle and squeamishness of these days then:

men did not groan and go about with pale faces, canting, as if field sports were anything ungodly. If any one of you thinks that God can't be good to a man who loves field sports, I hate your bastard Judaism.

There is an odd tale told of Blake putting up for a scholarship at Merton College, and failing, trying again, and again not succeeding. It is said that he did not get it because he was tall. But he was a thorough good scholar--not one of the deepest, but a great lover of the classics, which gentlemanly taste he retained through life. He loved old Horace to the last; and at that time of day it was not altogether approved of that the man who feared God should quote Horace.

He was also known at Oxford for his opinions. Whoever feeds his soul upon the classics becomes dangerous. No wonder that the French priest lately wanted to put them down altogether, and put the old musty theology of the fathers in their place. The classics heralded-in the Reformation, and were at the bottom of the republics of the world. Studying his classics, Blake drank in his hatred of kings and priestcraft, and became a thorough-paced lover of the principles of republicanism and the commonwealth. What he believed people soon found out, for he spoke his opinions freely. Hence he was known at college, by those who didn't like him, as a dangerous youth; his friends called him a rising man.

About this time, Archbishop Laud, with the soul of a petty pedant, was attempting to force his Middle-Age antiquarianism on England, and Blake got a thorough distaste for that. But there came signs of poverty at home. He gave up his college life. His father died, and the family were dependent on him. He did the work nobly, brought up his brothers and sisters, and made their way for them in life.

Then, by-and-bye, as you will remember, a king put his quarrel upon the issue. Now, when people are reasonable, they won't fight. But suppose there's a saw-pit, and both people want to be top sawyers; if neither will give way, fight they must. If Charles had listened to reason the little question would have been settled. But by-and-bye, he threw down the glove of battle, and there were plenty to take it up. Among them was Blake. He looked to his pike and his powder, got his friends and horses ready, and prepared himself for the time of fighting. When the

war broke out the first troop in the field was that of Robert Blake. Every man in it was a picked man, after Cromwell's pattern, a God-fearing man, that made conscience of the matter.

Blake very soon showed a strong fertility of genius, marvellous energy, and comprehensiveness of mind. All the west of England was for the King except Bristol, which was strong for the commonwealth. Well, Blake got command of a fort there, upon the taking or non-taking of which depended the taking or non-taking of the town. That was very absurd, of course, giving an Oxford student, who knew nothing of fortification, who had not the inestimable blessing of routine, a man not a Brahminical soldier born at the top of command,—it was very absurd and altogether irregular to give him any charge of that sort. But he did his work so well that volley after volley rolled back the royal troops, and the fort was not taken.

Rupert, the strange, adventurous, daring prince was there. He was a son of a king of Bohemia by an English princess; but things turned out badly in that kingdom, and they had to run. He wandered all over Europe, asking succour of the kings in vain, and getting it only from republican Holland. As soon as he came to England, the King wanted to make him governor of a colony, and Laud proposed to make him a bishop (every creature after its kind!), but he became neither. The fine old gentlemanly Cavaliers were taken with him in a moment; they loved the fiery, impetuous, daring dash and boldness of the man. They put him at the head of their cause, and there he was at Bristol. Well, the governor got weak-hearted, and surrendered; but in his anxiety to give in, he forgot to tell Blake that he had capitulated; and when the Royal soldiers went up to take possession of the fort, it was the old story—a rattling, terrible volley, that sent them reeling back. Rupert declared that was against the laws of war (and so it was), and that he had a good mind to hang Blake. It would have been a good thing for Rupert if he had; for Blake was his scourge through life, and put an end to Rupert by-and-bye. The governor was tried for not telling Blake of the capitulation, and thus putting in jeopardy the lives of his men. Ah! they were studiously finical and fastidious in those days of the lives of their fighting men.

Well, Blake was made a lieutenant-colonel in Popham's regi-

ment, and went down to Lyme Regis, where there happened to be some ships belonging to some rich Roundhead merchants of London; and Blake was to defend them. But Lyme Regis was just the very last place that ought to be defended upon sound orthodox rule. Upon sound principles of routine, nobody could or should defend it. But Blake did. Prince Maurice, Rupert's brother, went against him, and asked him to surrender—he could not think of defending that place. Blake told him he thought he should; as for surrendering, he knew nothing about it at all. And before that little nasty place Maurice raged and chafed, lost his most precious blood and best men; and then had to go and leave it, to tell that the defence of that place was against all rule—the most irregular and disorderly thing ever done.

Well, Blake got relief from London, and marched very soon to Taunton—most important at the time, as it blocked up Charles' way into Cornwall. It used to be the way in those days, if the Royal troops were in a town, and the Roundheads came in greater force, to march out at once. The Roundheads did the same by the Royal troops; and nobody had ever thought of defending Taunton. But this irregular Oxford student, great in Horace and in prayer, guiltless of the solemn rules of routine, when they asked him to walk out, said, "No; I will defend it." He held out.

During the pause was passed the "self-denying ordinance." What was that but the method Old England had in those days of getting rid of titled incapables? At the head of the Republican party were gentlemanly Essexes and Warwicks—lords, men that were born to command, that knew all about it, only they were double-minded men. They never lost battles if they could help it, for reputation's sake; they never won fights, because aristocracy would be in peril. It would have been invidious to have named persons, so the Act was made general, the Warwicks and Essexes went out, and the army and navy were for a little time headless. But men came—one a farmer, a man who had no business there, fond of draining, of chapel, Bible-reading, and prayer: *Cromwell* put himself at the head! Of course this was very bad. Who cared about seeing or hearing him? If Essex had sneezed, it would have been an honour; if Warwick had coughed, folks would have been enchanted; but who cared anything about Mister

Oliver Cromwell? Well, it was while Blake was keeping the Royalists at Taunton that the self-denying ordinance was passed, the turning-point in Cromwell's cause. The Somerset people were exceedingly disgusted with his conduct, and they said they would sweep him out. They asked him to give in, but he sent the quaint answer that he had committed his cause to the Lord, and he had not the smallest doubt that the Lord would see him through it. They did not sweep him out. Then came Berkeley, and also asked him to surrender, pointing out that famine was impending over the town, and that he might as well give in at once. Blake sent back word that he had not yet eaten his boots, and that he would never give up so long as he had the prospect of such a dinner before him. There was a pig in Taunton at that time, and Blake had it whipped in various quarters of the town, and there arose such a squealing that the besiegers thought that so long as there were so many pigs in Taunton, there was no chance of getting Blake out. Relief came at length, and all the folks ran off to church to hear a long sermon—good, though long; and such was the condition of the people that the soldiers, tired and hungry themselves, would not eat a morsel of their rations, but gave them up to the besieged.

Then came Goring, that brave and cruel soldier of King Charles. He determined to insult Blake, and sent in a little ragged tattered drummer with a flag of truce, to ask for an exchange of prisoners. Blake took the poor drummer, gave him a new suit, and sent him back. You can't beat a man who could do that. Goring burned a house in his rage, and Blake caused the bells to ring, because when the enemy got angry, he said they were sure to make fools of themselves. Taunton held out, but when the siege was ended there was little of Taunton left. The pivot of the whole of England's history was the disorderly, irregular, unheard of, and unroutine-like, grand, and noble defence of Taunton by Blake.

Then came Charles's fall. Against the king-killing, Blake freely spoke. "I will peril my life to save the King's," he said. But he was out-voted; the sacred and innocent blood was shed; and Blake, having said his say, went on with his work.

There is one incident which should have been mentioned before. One of his brothers, hearing that two Royalist officers

were on the road, mounted and went after them himself without reporting it; quarrelled with them, fought, and was killed. Blake was in the streets of Bridgewater when the news came. He said simply, "Samuel had no business there;" but as soon as he got into the house, away from the crowd, he shed many bitter tears. Tacitus said of our fathers, "They get done with their weeping quickly, but they keep their sorrows long." So I hope it will ever be.

Well, while many others had a call to London, where the Republican loaves and fishes were to be divided, Blake remained in the country; but by-and-bye Cromwell sent for him, and they proposed that he should turn admiral. He knew nothing of navigation, and yet they asked *him* to be an admiral who knew nothing of admiralship. They had no admiral, but they caught *a man!* Part of the navy was mild Presbyterian; the greater part was Royalist, and Rupert had got them away at Holland. Cromwell saw the push England was in; so, instead of sending over the town for Admiral Routine, to see if he could do it, and to Admiral Epaulette, if *he* was not capable, he sent for the man Blake. He appointed him with Deane and Popham, generals and admirals at sea. A man at that time was everything at once, just as you see Menschikoff wearing spurs on shipboard—a commander, governor, general, ambassador, and liar-in-chief for Russia.* They were ordered to do three things: first, to reorganise the navy; second, disperse the ships under Rupert; and, third, they were to put down the Irish rebellion. The navy *then* was like our Crimean army now—all wreck, rot, and ruin. Like our commissariat, there was plenty on paper, but nothing to be got. Blake insisted on seeing the things themselves, routed out incapables, soon put things to rights, and set out to fulfil the second and third parts of his commission. He soon got the love of his crew, for he was one of the tenderest, gentlest fighting men England ever had. He would send a big ship away—although he wanted his guns—home with a cargo of sick and wounded sailors. He took great care of the stuff with which our battles were fought. Blake went and chased Rupert to Portugal. Rupert got up into a neutral river, and because it was neutral Blake could not follow. He tried to

* This lecture was given in the winter of 1854, when we were at war with Russia.

get the King to let him, but he failed in that ; Rupert tried to get Blake assassinated, but he failed in that. Blake got tired of this, and as the Brazil fleet was coming home, he took them at once, and while he was fighting them, Rupert escaped. Then Blake went to the Scilly Islands—places impregnable, “that could not be taken” ; but he went and took them, knocked down the robbers’ cave, and regained the ships ; and Rupert died away.

There was a coolness between France and England ; there was no love between any court and England, for they all wanted to put Old England down ; and Blake, while sailing about, met a French ship. He told the captain to come on board. The man did, and Blake asked for his sword. He said he did not know they were at war, or that Blake wanted to fight. “Oh, but we are,” said Blake ; “go back and let us fight it out.” Back he went, and fight it out they did ; and the next time the captain appeared on Blake’s quarter-deck was to deliver up his sword.

Then we come to the great Dutch war. Holland had two great admirals, Van Tromp and De Ruyter, and the latter went against Blake. A storm came on, there was no fighting ; and when the Dutch Admiral went back the mob hooted him. Like all mobs, they were unreasonable. He had no business to have had a storm ; he was abused and reviled. The proud man knew that he had been ill-treated, so he retired. Van Tromp then took the command. He met Blake off Dover, and to it they went. We did not win, but we did not lose that battle. There was something wrong, and a commission was sent down at once on the moment to see whose fault it was, and to decide on the spot. They turned out the men that were to blame. Among them was Blake’s brother, who had been half-hearted, who had not done his best. Of course, Blake should have said, “Oh ! it’s my brother Ben ; he has not done his duty, but I promote him.” But no ; with the spirit of the old Roman, he broke him, and sent him away.

The next great battle was off Portland. For three whole days, “from morn till dewy eve,” they fought ; and when the fight was over the question was settled for ever. The Dutch lost 11 ships of war, 30 merchantmen, and 1500 sailors ; they had to pay the expenses of the war, turn out Charles II., and strike their flag

to England. Since those days the narrow seas have belonged to us, and the rule of the seas has been ours.

Blake went down, sick in health, to the country, at home with his brother Humphrey : walked about, had prayers, had a comfortable glass of canary, and sometimes two, and if anybody came in they had a bit of old Horace. But there came a war with Spain—for no particular reason ; but the people hated Spain. Blake was sent out to collect some little accounts, and the first debtor he called on was the Duke of Florence. Then he went to the Pope and told him he owed 12,000 pistoles ; and for the first time money actually flowed from the Vatican towards Old England. He then, while in the Mediterranean, came to Tunis. The Dey twirled his moustache, wanted to know who the English were, and, of course, as a king should do, refused to settle his account. Blake entered the harbour, blazed away at Dey's vessels, and, having set them on fire, went off to box the ears of the Knights of Malta. Then he came to Cadiz, and Lisbon, and Santa Cruz. The Spanish fleet lay under the guns of the harbour. Nobody would ever have thought of going in there to certain destruction ; but with a fair wind Blake swept in, blazed away the mortal day long, and when the sun sank there was not a single Spanish stick above water. In that affair the favourite brother of Blake, it was whispered, had been guilty of cowardice. "If none of you captains will charge him," said Blake, "I will." He was tried and found guilty. All the captains wrote a petition to Blake to allow his brother to go quietly home in his ship. Blake wrote at the bottom, "Allowed ;" but he added, in a line, "he shall never be employed more."

It is men like this that Old England wants now. If there is one book that Englishmen should read at this time, it is the life of the devout fighter of England, who counted not blood against duty.

Well, he felt he was dying, and asked leave to return. The ship came to Plymouth, the harbour was lined with crowds of his countrymen to welcome the hero ; and the guns were charged, the bells were ready, the shouts of welcome were hanging on the lips of anxious thousands, when there was a pause. The man was wanting. They went into his cabin, and there they found that

the moment the ship had touched the old hoary soil he loved so well, the man had died. Then they took the body to Greenwich, had it embalmed, carried it to Westminster, and buried it there. It slept there until Charles the Second came with his beggarly spawn, when they raked Blake's ashes out of the grave and threw them to the winds. The living curs of royalty were thought better than the dead lion of Republicanism.

So ends the history of this great man. Contrast him with some men at our head in the present day. I fear Englishmen are now a race of pigmies, unable to govern and unable to grow. From this old land that made tyrants tremble there is now no voice. Let us pray to God that He will send some man to England who will cut his way through routine and incapacity, who will pass a new self-denying ordinance, and who will not let the name of Old England be blotted out from the map.

JOHN MILTON.

BORN 1608. DIED 1674. (FROM 5TH JAMES I. TO 14TH CHARLES II.)

A HASTY criticism may incline some persons to say, "What new can be said about John Milton?" I believe there is nothing new to be said about him. An equally foolish criticism might say, when we are going to the Alps, "What is there new to be seen in the Alps?" There is nothing new to be seen, but we have not yet seen what is old. It is necessary, in order to understand Alps or poets, that everyone should take his own view, and that view, to each one, is the most important.

One is struck with wonder that you and I have never consulted together before about John Milton. But Milton is not a man for young people to talk about; it takes a great deal to understand a very great man, who has no parallel in his greatness. No man stands more by himself than does Milton. The only men who can have any relationship with Milton are Dante, as a Christian poet; Shakespeare, as being the superior man of intellect; the great German Goëthe, as being the great man of self-culture; and Milton's great friend, companion, and superior officer, Cromwell, because he was the friend, leader, champion, and true general of that Puritanism to which Milton devoted himself. When we have looked at Milton beside these four men, there is no other man in the world at all to be compared with him.

From materialism, in any of its shapes, he was wide as the poles asunder. If I had to select the passage in Milton's works, whether in prose or verse, which of all others sheds most light upon him, which explains him most, and most requires explaining by the man, it would be the one which is the sublimest utterance of egotism that perhaps the world has ever heard; yet not so much the egotism of the man as the egotism of humanity. It is a passage which you need to listen to with all your ears, for it is hard to catch the full sound and sense of it at one reading:—"For the

world, I count it not as an inn, but a hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself. It is the microcosm of mine own frame that I cast my eye on. For the other, I use it; but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude, for I am above Atlas his shoulders. The earth is *a point* not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me hurts not my mind. The surface that tells the heavens they have an end, cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above 360° . Though the number of the arc do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of the divinity within us—something that was before the elements, and owing no homage unto the sun. He that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man." That passage is the most splendid vindication of humanity against cant and false humility which has ever been written. Of course, Milton was, as all men are, of the earth, earthy, and notwithstanding his turning the world round as his globe, it had its revenges upon him, for we find him as most great men—if he goes wrong, he goes wondrously wrong. When really great men go right, they are mountain high; but when they go wrong, they are sea-deep.

Milton's father was a Puritan, but he had not the Puritanism of the present day, which is almost beneath contempt. He had none of the modern nonsense called "seriousness," by which some heavy-headed booby, incapable of seeing the grace and the glory of art, or unable to listen to the charm of music, or to catch the mirth of the world, shakes his dull heavy head, lead-weighted as it is, and putting down all cakes and ale, declares himself to be "serious." He took pride in his little lad John, and did not let him scramble into education, or "pick up" knowledge, but while he gave him bread for the body, he fed him with the daily bread of the mind and of the soul.

We will pass over Milton's continental trip, and picture him on his return to England. He was consummately beautiful; his body was perfect, every limb truly balanced; a man like an antique

god; his face was perfection, his auburn hair flowing in glory; there was nothing defective, halt, or limping about him. With a sword in his hand he would fence with the best swordsman in Europe, while, if he took the harp, he could play with the best musicians in the world. Milton was thoroughly Greek in the true sense. He had the sereneness and self-sufficiency of the old Greeks, and their peculiar intellectual power, rather than emotional nature. Passionate in his love of freedom, is it to be wondered at that he was a Republican? How many kings have there been, before whom such a king as Milton could be brought to bow down? You cannot bring a man up to consummate manhood, and ask him to bow down to golden calves or things unworthy to rule. I scorn the pitiful affectation of the moderns, who think it is sin for a man to avow himself a Republican, when that great and mighty master of grace, accomplishment, and godliness, declared himself to be unable to bow his head to men, except they were what he was himself—erect in virtue, upright, manly, fit to guide and to lead. When any of you can reach high enough to touch that man's shoe-buckle, then it may be time to talk as some of you do. Could a consummate Greek like that be anything else than a Republican? Impossible.

Comparing Milton with Goëthe—with the latter self-culture was an end, while Milton cultivated himself for the world, for work, for God, and for man. Goëthe ended in himself, while Milton cultivated himself with equal care and success, in order to throw himself into the din of battle, into the strife of politics, into the stir of humanity, into the frivolities, if you like, which distinguish political strife. Milton entered heartily into the struggles of politics. He was not like some men of the present day, who affect to despise politics as "low." This all-accomplished man came into the world to serve and to work. He sat down and wrote pamphlets—most abusive ones too—and he stood by the side of Cromwell, that rough soldier, who found in him a friend.

There is nothing more wonderful in literary history than to compare Milton with Shakespeare. I have shown you the all-accomplished and all-cultivated scholar; but Shakespeare was not accomplished in the ordinary sense. Shakespeare never went to college; and, thank God, knew no language but his own, for it was from Shakespeare knowing English so well that he wrote the

splendid English he did write. What a rebuke to those of us who are going in for education and culture too much! Where Milton was greatest, Shakespeare was as great, and then he had what Milton had not, a large comprehensive sympathy. The flaw in Milton is that he wants mirth—there is no laughter in the man. Milton had no humour; but Shakespeare could paint sages, simpletons, saints, and sots. Shakespeare was tender, even to improper people—like Burns, who was tender even with the devil; but Milton was hard and bitter. In some respects, Shakespeare overtopped Milton. In Shakespeare we have a great Catholic; in Milton, a great Sectarian. There was nothing of the priest in Shakespeare; he did not try to make men better or wiser, except incidentally. Milton, on the other hand, was a priest struggling to make men better, a Sectarian pleading for a great cause. In Shakespeare and Milton stand two mighty pillars in the temple of English literature. They are beauty and strength: one, a child of nature brought up on its most rich diet, a genius highly cultured; and the other greater, because he was more universal, and more pitiful, and more sympathetic.

Milton's domestic sympathies were weak, and his most unfortunate and inexplicable marriage with Mary Powell was a stupendous act of folly. The misery attendant upon that marriage may be in some part due to the fact that Milton married a girl instead of a woman. Milton, the man of thirty-five, of splendid culture and glorious person, but with a hardness in his nature which we all regret, with a want of tenderness and pity which has robbed him, and robbed him justly, of much of the world's love, by a sudden impulse which no man can account for, went down into the country, and came back burdened with a young girl—and *such* a girl! One doesn't blame her; she was only seventeen years and a half, and perhaps had hardly done with her doll. He took her into a stately house, austere, severe, where she had no companions except two or three of the girls she took with her, and who stayed for a while. Then in a very short time, disenchanted of whatever strange enchantment there might have been, she left him, Milton, no doubt, giving her a sort of helping push, and consenting to the child going back to her old home. And then, before she was out of the house, while her step was yet to be heard on the stair, he sat down to write those terrible tracts on Divorce. We will not

now discuss those tracts, because, in the first place, probably none of you take a practical interest in the question ; and, secondly, because they are rather strong meat, and not all of you have arrived at the time of life for strong meat. They are very full of strong language, and that in great variety. In them Milton rings the changes upon unlovely marriages and dreary women. He describes such marriages as a worse condition than the loneliest single life. He describes such wives as the one he had got, as mute and spiritless mates, and the maintenance of the marriage tie under such circumstances as the impossible performance of an ill-driven bargain. He talked about married people hating one another with a most operative hatred, and about the chaining of a living soul to a dead body.

It was a noble spirit which led Milton to enter into the arena of political and theological strife. This born poet, this worshipper of beauty, this splendid scholar, laid aside not only his tastes, but his largest ambition and glorious dream, in order to discharge what he believed to be a great public duty. Taught by what he so emphatically called "God's secretary, conscience," instead of taking the course which most men would have done, that splendid man laid his laurel wreath down, and bade it lie there, forgotten and neglected ; he hung up his glorious harp, and took down the weapons of conflict ; he left poetry for theology, left beauty for politics, left works of art to plunge into a battle in which sectaries were to be his companions, fanatics and fools both his enemies and his friends. Perhaps a more splendid case than this of true sacrifice to what is considered to be the weal of the nation has not been seen in modern times. Though he wrote politics with a splendour no other Englishman has ever reached, yet Milton still confessed that that was not the kind of writing in which he felt himself at his best ; for, in words eminently significant and admirably quaint respecting this new kind of writing—treatises on Divorce, on Prelacy, and the Tenure of Kings—he said it was "a manner of writing wherein, knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand." No man could put it better ; to write politics was with him to write with the left hand. What a marvellous *right* hand his must have been !

But his sight failed, and people said it was a judgment from

God for taking the wrong side. (We still hear some of that old imbecility.) But if a man uses his eyes too much, even in reading religious tracts, he will turn blind. Milton studied the Hebrew Bible every morning; but he had no family worship, attended no church or chapel, and belonged to no sect, believing that God must be worshipped in spirit, and holding converse with the Hebrew prophets. He who surpasses or subdues mankind must have solitude as his companion, and that was the case with Milton.

Upon his return from Italy, he might have joined either in the Catholic revival, the Protestant movement, the revival of Greek learning, or with Archbishop Laud and his rites and ceremonies; but he had no liking for revivals of the past.

And what have *we* to do with bringing back yesterday? If yesterday cannot keep itself alive, I will not be its resurrectionist. We have something better to do than turn gravediggers. I do not believe in any revivals of the past, either in religion or art; and I think that amongst the most voluminously absurd things which God's earth has been plagued with in our own times are some of our modern chapels, with their revivals of styles of architecture.

Milton left his poetry,¹ and plunged into the mud, the mire, the dirt, and the storm of politics, and took his side with Cromwell for freedom for the man, freedom for the State, and freedom for the Church. That was his Puritanism—unlike what is often called Puritanism now—and he drew a bright picture of the future of England. But his picture was not realised, and the Restoration followed—the Restoration for which, until lately, the nation has given God thanks in church! Milton expected the Second Advent of Christ; but Charles the Second was restored instead, to rule over England.

At length total blindness came upon Milton, and his days were drawing to their ending. His politics done with, his left hand taken out of service, he resumed the use of his glorious right hand, his youth's dream was carried out, and he wrote his poem of poems, "Paradise Lost." Never, perhaps, has there been a similar case of a man putting away his youth's dream at the call of duty, and then living to take it up. As he got old he did not become feeble. Wrapped in an old gray coat, he sat sunning

himself at the door of his house, his life's battle over, his youth's dream carried out.

Do you think that man repented of anything he had written or done? Not he. Recant? Not a word. Never once having faltered or failed, with him there was now no change of opinion. Self-satisfied in the highest sense, agreeing with all he had ever believed or said, the sun shone upon him, his soul walked in glory far away from the crowd of the street, and he held converse with Hebrew prophets, whilst the great Romans and the greater Greeks were ever present to him.

And so, at last, this great soul passed away, without sigh or tear, without weeping or wailing, without repenting or recanting. Though much lacking in tenderness, though we can hardly love him, yet he was a prince of scholars and a great poet. Take Milton for all in all—politician, poet, man—there has been none greater than he. Perhaps Wordsworth's characterization of him will always continue the best :

“ His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.”

ANDREW MARVELL.

BORN 1620. DIED 1678. (FROM 17TH JAMES I. TO 18TH CHARLES II.)

AMONGST English worthies of a second rank, one of the most noble is Andrew Marvell. He was not one of the greatest men of his time, but was the honestest and best of the second-class men. He lives by virtue of one anecdote and one characteristic: the anecdote I shall hereafter refer to, and the characteristic you will see running through the whole of his life. He was one of the most incorruptible Englishmen that ever lived; he lived in days the most corrupt and thoroughly despicable that England ever knew—in the reign of the weakest, and at the same time the vilest monarch that ever disgraced the English throne, Charles the Second. Charles was, as a king, as vile as he was as a man, and nothing but the subservience we shall have to look into by-and-bye, backed by the Church, and therefore followed by the State, could ever have induced a man to believe the king worthy of his support, or have led great men to grovel at his feet. All the great trees in England were cut down, except two or three, and amongst these, the tallest and most noble was Andrew Marvell.

In following the rule that you cannot know much about a man unless you know something of his father (and I need not remind you that what we have done for ourselves is often very little, and what our fathers have done for us is often the largest part of anything distinguishing about us), we shall have to look a little into his family. His father was a native of Cambridge, and master of the grammar-school at Kingston-upon-Hull. He was a very upright, bold, courageous Englishman—a man pious, withal facetious and grave. These things may be easily united in a healthy, sound-minded man; and when they are disunited, it only proves that the man is unhealthy. Andrew was his only son, who became afterwards noted. The circumstances of the father's death were characteristic. He lived on the one side of the river Humber.

and he had a friend, a lady, who lived on the other side. This lady had an only daughter upon whom she doted. This daughter crossed the river to attend a family baptism in Marvell's household, and she being anxious to get back the same day, went down to the water side, Mr Marvell, senior, attending her. The weather was stormy, but the obstinate girl was determined to cross, and, though warned by the boatman of the danger, persisted in her determination, for fear her mother should be anxious. Mr Marvell, too, a thorough gentleman, seeing that she had crossed for his pleasure, determined to re-cross with her, and, so sure and certain did he feel of the result of that short passage, that when he went on board the boat, just as they were putting off, he threw his gold-headed cane on the shore, and asked whoever might pick it up to give it to his son Andrew; and then, with that cheerfulness that perfect men always feel, he cried out, "Ho! anybody for heaven?" Before they had got half across the river, the boat upset, and both the generous man and the enthusiastic girl whom he was so chivalrously escorting, met their death. The bereaved mother of the young girl took great interest in Andrew Marvell, and, after her grief was over, sent for him, and befriended him ever afterwards, and at her death left him her little fortune.

Marvell was born 15th November 1620. He received a good education. At fifteen years of age he went to Cambridge, and entered Trinity. There he stayed until they sent a recruiting party to Cambridge, when he fell in with a recruiting sergeant of the black regiment of Jesuits. They sent their recruiting sergeants where young men were most rife, and unfortunately enlisted Marvell into their ranks. After a long and unremitting chase, he was found by his friends at a bookseller's shop, and carried back in triumph to Cambridge. This ended his connection with Jesuitism, and he never liked either Jesuits or Pope afterwards. We do not see much of Marvell's college life, except one ugly-looking entry in the books—"It is agreed by the masters and seniors that Mr Carter, Dominus Wakefield, Dominus Marvell, Dominus Waterhouse, and Dominus May, in regard that some of them are reported to be married, and the others look not after their ways nor acts, shall receive no more benefit of the college, and shall be out of their places, unless they show cause to the college for the contrary, in three months." Some of them had married, and some

of them had neglected their exercises ! The first of these crimes is by far the greatest for a man at college to be guilty of ; for what has marriage to do with books ? I am happy in being able to tell you that Marvell was only guilty of the lesser fault. He, however, got into some other scrapes at Cambridge, and was finally expelled. Possibly he was tired of gerund grinding, and found some of the principles rather fogleish.

He was thrown from Cambridge into the wide world, and proceeded to do what almost every man of good birth and high breeding did in those days—he travelled. Whilst in Rome, he became acquainted with another Englishman, John Milton. Milton was some eight years older than Marvell, and those eight years helped Marvell to that due reverence for Milton, which is necessary to give the true tone in friendship between man and man. These young men felt all courage in Rome, and they astonished the people by their free speaking upon Protestantism, and also by their polished speech and accomplished manners, showing the inhabitants of the Seven-Hilled City that there were scholars in England with better heads and bolder hearts than any the shadows of the Vatican had produced for many years. There being some priest there who had been making rather an extra fool of himself, Marvell fell to and attacked him. This made Rome warm, and they went to Paris. Here Marvell fell foul of a worthy Abbé, who had a theory about finding out people's character by their hand-writing, and had written a little book upon it. Marvell wrote a satire upon the book, and thus made Paris warm.

There is a long gap here, and the only thing we can see of Marvell is that, on returning home, he was tutor to Lord Fairfax's daughters. There is a notion now-a-days that women are better educated than they were once. But that is all nonsense, you know. Women were once a great deal better educated than they are now. We have only to go back to Queen Elizabeth's time, and we find that ladies then spoke Latin admirably, and could read Greek fluently, and speak the French language, not like a great many women now, with an English accent, but very well. There is a notion that the education of woman is quite a new idea. No such thing : it has gone backwards, and not forwards. Well, Marvell was employed for the education of Lord Fairfax's daughters. He afterwards became joint-secretary with

Milton to Oliver Cromwell, and in that capacity composed his grand apology for the Protector.

After spending a year and a half in that occupation, he was, in the year 1660, returned as M.P. for Kingston-upon-Hull, and he was paid for it. It is considered quite an awful thing now to pay a Member of Parliament. It is extremely "proper" to look the most horrible disgust, when anyone ever proposes such a thing. But it was the old English custom, and we of the present day are the innovators. That sounds strange to you, who have such an abomination of paying members of Parliament. But we pay the Queen to govern us; we pay a gentleman to be her husband;* we pay the archbishop to look after the bishop, and we pay the bishop to look after the curate, and we pay the curate to see to our souls; we pay the policeman to watch for us, and we pay the hangman to hang us. Nothing for nothing is the Englishman's rule, until we come to the member of Parliament. Marvell always took his salary, and I admire him for it. People have no objection to anyone else being paid for speaking, whether lawyer or parson; but when it comes to paying a Member of Parliament, it is counted a shame indeed. All this fudge is sheer cant. I consider the old-fashioned way of paying members is much better than the new-fangled one of members paying their constituents for electing them. What a fuss some of you make when the physician comes to see you! How he tacks all over the room, and you walk after him; then you put his guinea up in a piece of paper, and, pretending to shake hands with him, you put it into his hand! What nonsense! He would not have come, if you did not pay him. Put the money down on the table, and let him give you a receipt for it with a stamp upon it. They used to pay the members in Marvell's time; but now you expect a member to open every dirty disgusting beer-shop in your dirty borough, and pour the beer down the throat of every dry-throated fool that likes to have it. Sometimes the good people of Hull, in addition to his salary, made their member a little present, and on one occasion we find him writing to them acknowledging the receipt of a barrel of ale, and praising its quality as being "bright, good, and strong," so much so that he said it was "a great risk to a sober man." Marvell carried out, while in Parliament, the habit of writ-

* This lecture was delivered in 1859. The Prince Consort died in 1861.

ing to his constituents, and giving them a minute account of the proceedings of every session ; and he tells us that, on one or two occasions, he went without his dinner that he might not disappoint them. He was a man much looked up to in the House. Though he was no speaker, yet he wrote well. Sometimes Prince Rupert voted on his side. Rupert had great respect for Marvell ; and when the Prince talked sense, which he did occasionally, people used to say that he had been with his tutor, and that tutor was Marvell. The history of Prince Rupert is an eventful one. The son of a king, he escaped from the flames of his father's palace, and after wandering over Europe, met with an asylum in England with his uncle, Charles the First. He became a soldier, bold to a fault, and intrepid without judgment. After the downfall of Charles he left England and took the command of that part of the English fleet which still adhered to the royal cause. He was followed by Blake, by whom he was compelled at last to give up pirate's work. After the Restoration he returned to England and spent the rest of his days in philosophising and making experiments in mezzotint.

Marvell had a great dislike to two things—standing armies and excise duties. He lived in some of the worst days of English history—when the reign of the saints was over, and that of the strumpets had taken its place. It was the day of that graceless scamp Charles the Second, whose character is best described in the epitaph made on him by one who knew him well.*

“ Here lies our mutton-eating king,
Whose word no man relies on ;
He never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise on’.”

It was an age when men committed iniquity and gloried in it, and wrote “sinner” without shame across their foreheads. The king sold the country for foreign money, and bartered his own and his kingdom's dignity and interest for a mess of dirty French pottage, like a royal traitor as he was. The time was a time of reaction, and reaction is always extravagant, for, as Luther coarsely though truly said, “Human nature is like a drunken beggar on horseback, gets on on one side and falls off on the

* The witty Earl of Rochester.

other." Hence it was no easy thing for Marvell, as a member of Parliament, to uphold liberal principles at such a time, when the nation made an idol of Charles the Second. Charles the Second certainly was the drollest idol ever nation set up; that black-haired, witty, good-for-nothing scamp. Still, it did set him up, and it has been the hardest work to keep the reaction within bounds. Marvell was a man that would never take a bribe, though he always took his salary. I have no notion of people affecting not to like to receive the money their services have earned. St Paul himself sanctioned taking money for preaching, and I fully believe in the doctrine, and practise it too. On one occasion the Duke of Monmouth went to Hull, and the Corporation broke out into extravagant demonstrations of loyalty, as Corporations always do at such times, and amongst other modes of displaying it made the Duke an honorary present of six broad pieces, which he offered to Marvell, who refused them.

Comparing Charles the Second with George the Fourth, the first was at all events a clever scamp, good-humoured, and witty; while the last was merely a stupid sensuality. Wit was Charles the Second's delight. Charles would rather have been *laughed at* wittily, than not have had wit at all. The times were fearfully corrupt in Charles's reign; but Marvell undesistingly maintained his integrity in the midst of all. Marvell went to Court, got into conversation with Charles, and made such an impression that Charles became very anxious to secure his services. The next day he sent his Lord-Treasurer, Danby, to find him out. This was rather a difficult matter; but at last the minister found the house in a little street leading out of the Strand, and then occurred that famous scene that makes Marvell immortal. The Treasurer got to the first floor: no Andrew Marvell on that floor (only such people as you and I live on the first floor). Then he found himself up on the second floor; but *that* would not do. Then he stumbled his way up to the top-pair, and the door stood open, and there was Marvell writing. The Treasurer made him a model bow. Marvell said he was afraid he had lost his way. The Treasurer said he had not, if it had conducted him to Mr Marvell. So they talked about the weather and about all sorts of things, except the subject he had come about. There is nothing very difficult in coming to the point, when one party does not know

what it is; but when we both know what we want, what a time it takes to get at it! By-and-bye it was time for the Treasurer to go, and then he told Marvel how delighted the king had been with him last night, and, quite accidentally, dropped a £1000 note upon the table. Now, consider on the one side lodgings in a three-pair back, on a scant salary, and on the other an offer of £1000. What did Marvell do? He knew what it meant. He knew what was meant by a compliment from Charles II. There are very few people who have soul enough to give you one when they should. They let it go by for a time—let it alone for six months, perhaps. They are intending, some day, to show you a lively sense of gratitude; but they put it off. But a compliment from Charles the Second, and an offer of £1000! What did Marvell do? He rang the bell, and up came Buttons. “What did we have for dinner yesterday?” said Marvell. “Oh, we had that little shoulder.” “Oh,” said he, “yes; and what did we have for dinner to-day?” “The shoulder cold.” “Oh, so we did; and what shall we have for dinner to-morrow?” “Broth,” said Buttons. “Good,” said Marvell, “you may go down.” Then he said to the Lord-Treasurer, “Marvell’s dinners are provided, you see; Marvell wants not the king’s money.” Now, a man cannot do one thing like that without doing many things like that. The thousand pounds went back to the dirty source from whence it came, and Marvell was none the worse for sending it. If I were going to name a fresh constellation, I think I should name it “Andrew Marvell’s Shoulder of Mutton.” The shoulder of mutton of Marvell ranks with the wine tub of Diogenes, the Roman general’s dish of turnips, the leather coat and continuations of George Fox, and the sawdust dumplings of Benjamin Franklin. They should all be borne in mind, as proving the true secret of independence to be having few wants.

Then came the contest between Marvell and Parker, Bishop of Oxford, a man with the morals of a publican and the bigotry of a Pharisee, who called Dissenters vipers, and heresy a greater sin than adultery. Marvell put down that prelate by the publication of his satire *The Rehearsal*; and a reward of £50 was offered for the discovery of the printer, and of £100 for the author. Marvell, however, escaped prosecution. This man maintained his position in the senate for twenty years; but by-and-bye his

enemies began to thicken and multiply. You cannot have a sharp pen without having many enemies. He was waylaid more than once; but it never put him out, he said. At last, after going down to Hull in July to make a speech to his constituents, he died in London in peace, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, on the 16th November 1678. He died very suddenly, and it was said that he had been poisoned, but I cannot see any ground for the suspicion, and it is impossible to prove it at this distant period. There is no interest, to some people, in a man's dying in a natural way; so it has been written down that Marvell was poisoned. He was "beloved by good men, feared by bad men, admired by all, and imitated by few." What nobler epitaph could a man have? And I especially note to you one beautiful clause—"feared by bad men." In these days there is such a desire for being feared by no man. Marvell was the terror of England. When he dipped his pen in the ink, he was the terror of all corrupt people. His whip was one of the sharpest, and his lash was always laid on in admirable fashion. Some of you may remember that of all men I respect him whose writings are lawfully satirical, and Marvell's "king's speech" (a sham speech for Charles the Second) is one of the finest things for satire I ever saw. He had a most biting satirical talent, and he used it as few men do. He used it lawfully, because only against base curs; for satire is always lawful and laudable against bad and mean things, though it should never be used against good ones. Some people doubt whether it is right to be satirical. Now, I would say, never doubt whether it is right to be satirical, so long as there are any vermin in the world. I am certain that almost any instrument is lawful against them. If a thing be an imposture, lash it as hard and as fast as you can. Satire is abominable only when it is directed against anything that is weak or gentle. Marvell wrote a droll satire on the Dutch, in which he depicted them as manufacturing their country with handfuls of earth dragged out of the sea, and alleged that their king should be the man amongst them who could drain best.

Marvell also wrote several poems. Some of them are beautiful enough, and they show a rather extensive knowledge of the classic languages, and a rare culture. Nature had bestowed upon this man some of her most admirable gifts, and cultivation had

done everything that was possible to perfect him. He began life a poor man, and he died a poor man. So long as there are left in this nation just ten righteous men—enough to save us—so long will Andrew Marvell's name be remembered among us.

I have no intention of giving any seasonable lessons upon elections; but it is a strange thing how a man now will spend thousands of pounds to get an honour that men at that time used to run away from. Any man, with no moral qualification whatever, but possessed of wealth, is returned with enthusiasm by free, enlightened, and independent electors. They have nothing but a big purse, and that is enough for this generation. Marvell's letters to his constituents are admirable; they are written by a faithful, painstaking man, and contain an account of all that went on in the House of Commons. They are some of the greatest curiosities in England; therefore, when any of you want to get yourselves up to electioneering pitch, let me recommend to you these letters of Marvell's to his constituents. You may meet with a coarse word now and then, but if you have nothing bad in you, you will not find much there.

I have a perfect veneration for this incorruptible Englishman. I can only lament that he has very few successors. If you wish such men to be more common, the best way is to create a demand, and you will have them. The present representative of Birmingham, John Bright, has a great touch of old Marvell in his composition, in his dauntless courage, and incorruptible honesty. True, Mr Bright has the Quaker views about war; but many a man is a Quaker by grace, but a fighting man by nature; and in electing him you have chosen as your representative, of all men in England, the man most like Andrew Marvell.*

* These closing sentences indicate the motive of the lecture. In its first delivery it had reference to John Bright, who was returned for Birmingham without any expense to himself.

RICHARD BAXTER.

BORN 1615. DIED 1691. (FROM 12TH JAMES I. TO 2ND WILLIAM AND MARY.)

COLERIDGE well and justly wrote, "We had in the time of Charles the First at once the glory and the shame of the English Diocesan Church: the glory, for the vast and various learning and the stupendous talents of its prelates, dignitaries, and clergy; and the shame, for their atrocious cruelties, and the rapid approximation to the superstitions and doctrinal heresies that the Reformation had upset; but the reign of Charles the Second was the reign of infamy of the Church of England."

Fortifying oneself by the authority of so good a Churchman as Coleridge, I will proceed to put before you the life of perhaps the greatest of the Nonconformist divines—Richard Baxter, born in Shropshire, near the river Severn, hard by Eaton Constantine, in the year 1615. His father had a moderate estate, which he got through by immoderate expenditure. He had in his youth been a gambler, and had got through his money; and in his later years he became not only religious but puritanical, taking very scant pleasure in the gross, careless, and sensual life by which he was almost entirely surrounded. Poor little Richard Baxter's early education was necessarily entrusted to such clerical people as were to be found in the neighbourhood, but the samples were something about as shameful as ever the Church admitted within its range. There was an old clergyman, who never had had much zeal, and who had lost what little strength he ever had; and around this old cumberer of the ground (incumbent they called him) there were grouped in succession a set of about the most notoriously worthless gamblers, cobblers, tinkers, and broken-down tradesmen that ever tried to get a living out of the vineyard of the Church, when they found they could not get one elsewhere. One had laid the flail, another the thimble, a third was "the excellentest stage player in the neighbourhood," and a fourth an attorney's clerk, who, not

having done honour to his own profession, was not likely to shed much dignity upon the office of clergyman. Among these ruffians Baxter spent his early years, going thence to the grammar school at Wroxeter, whose master was Mr Richard Wicksted, chaplain at the council at Ludlow. While here, Baxter wished to go to a university, but his master did not consent, because of the neglected state of the lad's early education. Mr Wicksted was a very negligent tutor, but he had a very good library, in which the lad got plenty of reading. He afterwards supplied his old master's place at Wroxeter; and there being no chance of his going to the university, he went to Mr Garbett, and studied theology under him. After having, by the patronage of Lord Newport, who was a friend of his father's, obtained some little assistance, it was proposed that he should go to Court, and go to Court he did, having a special introduction by Sir Henry Herbert, who was Master of the Revels. He remained at Court for one month, and then discovered what he might have known before, that he was about the last man in the world cut out for the sublime farce and solemn ineptitude of dancing a fool's attendance about a Court, being in truth one of the solemnest men that ever lived, one upon whom the next world intruded all his life long. What could *he* do at Court? How could *that* satisfy a man whose soul was ever pondering upon the saint's "everlasting rest"? As was to be expected, he soon came back again into the country, where his natural seriousness, inherited from his father, and increased by the dissipation of a month at Court, led him to ponder on the work he had to do. He took to reading Puritan divines, and found more nourishment for his soul in them than in anything Sir Henry Herbert could introduce him to. The Bishop of Worcester shortly afterwards ordained him; he obtained a school-master's license, and in Dudley, Richard Baxter set up his ferrule for the first time.

At that time he was a Conformist; but he read, listened, and observed,—all of which are often dangerous for Conformists,—and the result was, that he came to reject, first, the indiscriminate communion of the Church of England, then compulsory subscription to articles. Then he scrupled at the sign of the Cross in baptism; then he became an adversary of what was then called the English Diocesan Frame. The next of his little heresies was that he did not care that people should kneel down at the Communion; and

then he had scruples about the surplice, and had very great doubts about wearing that white and innocent garment. Last of all, he objected to what was then called the famous "Et-cetera Oath." So this Conformist became a little nonconforming, always longing for unity and striving for harmony, but nevertheless obliged to leave the Church which he loved so well, until at last we find him a Presbyterian.

The next move in his life was to Kidderminster, to act as the curate of the vicar, who closely resembled the Shropshire clergy among whom Baxter's early lot was cast, and who was persuaded by his flock to leave the place in charge of curates. Here Baxter passed probably the happiest, as certainly the noblest, time of his life—when he was a model pastor at Kidderminster. A just, upright, bold, valorous shepherd was this, rebuking sin without hesitation, and the vices of the town without faltering. He was then (as was the custom of the clergy in those days) teacher, almoner, physician, friend, and legal adviser of his flock; and with this position, while he knew when to apply the rod to the sinners' backs, he knew when to apply the balm to their souls. He could wield the scourge, like Christ in the Temple, and could also administer the unction of comfort with tenderness.

While he remained in Kidderminster, there came the sound of war, for the Civil War had broken out. Baxter was a Monarchy man; but whilst he believed the old monarchy to be a priceless blessing, and was too true a man to be a partisan, he yet loved very many of the Puritans. This the people could not understand, and the consequence was that he was suspected by both sides. He got into trouble at Kidderminster, and had an evil time of it; and the people there, to whom he had spoken with so much plainness, joined in running him down. Baxter then took refuge with a number of other clerical brethren at Coventry, among whom were some of the sweetest, simplest souls that ever lived. What that body of simple souls who took refuge there thought in their retirement was told by Baxter. "In the simplicity of our hearts, we believed Essex and Cromwell were fighting the battles of King Charles;" and "when the Court newsbook told the world that swarms of Anabaptists were in our army, we thought it was a lie."

After a time Baxter became an army chaplain, and was present

at Edge Hill, and present as chaplain to Whalley's regiment at the sieges of Bristol, Sherborne, and Worcester. The soldiers among whom he was could not only fight, but conduct theological arguments; and at Amersham in Bucks, Baxter on one occasion conducted an argument which lasted from morn till dewy eve, with a regiment of buff jerkins. He would have the soldiers listen to him, and they were willing, provided they could have their say; so he got up in his pulpit, the soldiers filled the church, and there from morning till nearly night he argued with them, and kept possession of the pulpit until they left the church, so that he claimed the victory.

Now Cromwell had no very great love for these eternal disputings of soldiers. He had a secret contempt for them, as all earnest men must have, and so he disliked Baxter, and would not listen much to him. He had a belief that there was something else to do than to be splitting theological hairs, and to be continually dipping down into the dark to come up loaded with obscurity. The consequence was that, when Baxter was introduced to Cromwell, he had a very cold reception. But they afterwards had many long discussions, and it is delicious to read the accounts which Baxter himself gives of the contests between them. Baxter left a good portrait of Cromwell. "He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory, but not well seen in the principles of religion; of a sanguine complexion, and naturally of such vivacity, hilarity, and alacrity, as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much, but naturally also very far from humble thoughts of himself, and that was his ruin." They neither of them loved the other, and Baxter hit upon a curious scheme for detaching first one, and then all the regiments from Cromwell; but, happily for him, the Protector did not discover the scheme which the inventor was prevented by illness from carrying out, or most assuredly the engineer would have been "hoist with his own petard." It quite broke down.

Always a bold man, Baxter still raised his voice against what he called the treason, rebellion, perfidiousness and hypocrisy of Cromwell. He preached it in the pulpit, he wrote it to him in letters, told it him to his face; but Cromwell, being a brave man, and loving bravery in others, was not much disturbed by what came from Baxter. He had a great respect for Baxter, although he dis-

liked him, and Baxter was invited to preach before the Lord Protector. Glad of the chance, he resolved to "improve the occasion," and preach a "faithful" and "searching" sermon (both good phrases), and so Cromwell was not spared. Believing in his heart that Cromwell had encouraged sectaries, he lifted up his parable against him. The thesis was: "On the sin of politicians keeping up divisions and sects, in order that they may fish in troubled waters." The Lord Protector listened to the sermon, and then got up and had a down-right good argument with Baxter. It was not unusual for people to reply to the preacher in those days. Baxter has left a report of the circumstance, in which he lets down Cromwell and lauds himself with great vigour. According to Baxter, "the Protector began by a long tedious speech." The sermon was two hours long. The Protector's speech was "of God's providence in the change of government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done both at home and abroad;" and "when he had wearied us" (says Baxter) "with speaking about an hour, I told him that it was too great condescension to acquaint me so fully with all this matter, but I told him that we took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing, and not an evil to the land, and I humbly craved his patience that I might ask him how England had forfeited that ancient blessing, and unto whom that forfeiture was made. Upon that question he wakened up with somewhat of a passion, and he told me it was no forfeiture, but God had changed it as pleased him," &c. "Thus four or five hours were spent;" and during this long discourse "Lambert fell asleep," as it was natural he should.

In these discussions, however, Cromwell used to get the better of Baxter, as he not only summed up the debate, but also voted twice. Baxter has told the story of these discussions in his own inimitable way, and has acknowledged his defeat; but he also told Cromwell that he could answer all his arguments in two sheets of paper. Poor Baxter could not meet Cromwell in the Council, but he felt that if he were alone he could soon answer the arguments. Cromwell, however, believed that he was right, and as long as he could have his own say, he did not care what other people might desire to say. It was a sad way to treat divinity, and it is no wonder that Baxter resented it, for he was out-talked and outnumbered by Cromwell. He could not get a word in, and that

was a sad state of affairs, as many of you who are present to-night will be aware of if you have ever seen a man at the British Association waiting anxiously to read a paper. (Long after this, however, Baxter lived to see his blessed Monarchy restored, and to say bitterly that he had seen days of greater liberty under the rule of "an usurper." He spoke bitter words on the tyrant he was bound to submit to. Under Cromwell he had had liberty, but under Charles II. he had only the liberty to write.)

Baxter, after the failure of his theological scheme to blow up the army and carry Cromwell prisoner, went back to Kidderminster, and continued to work in peace and righteousness, being faithful and courageous, and in his infirmities he laboured on in the cause he had adopted.

I shall rapidly pass over the historical facts that followed, and come to the restoration of the house of Stuart. The Parliament then distrusted the Nonconformists, and estimated that their own strength was small and the Presbyterians' was great. However, they soon found out that they themselves were stronger than they expected, and that the Nonconformists were only very weak. So, instead of treating the Nonconformists with Christian love and charity, they treated them with some indifference. Baxter was at Kidderminster when he was called as one of four clergymen of the Presbyterian Church to preach before King Charles II., who, not knowing then the relative weakness of the Nonconformists, compared with his own people, professed a desire to grant some liberty to them. Baxter preached before the king, and before Hyde and Southampton (politicians of the fine Italian flavour), on "The contrast between the sensual and the spiritual life." The sermon still exists, and is without parallel, for in its whole course there is not one courtly phrase to relieve the sad censure of the whole. When, however, the King found that the Nonconformists were not so powerful as he had imagined, Baxter was requested to provide a scheme of church government, and was offered the Bishopric of Hereford. He did all he could to bring the dissenting clergymen into the Church, but failed, and he declined the bishopric which had been offered to him. Then came the Conference at the Savoy,* at which Baxter attended, and fought some

* A palace in the Strand, built by Peter, Duke of Savoy, more than a hundred years before.

good battles in aid of the belief that he had accepted. The bishops who attended the Conference had gone there with their minds made up as to the conclusion, so there was little good resulting from it. The sham conference in the Savoy over, then came the downfall, and the shamefullest period in the history of this country. The Act of Uniformity—the disgrace of the English Church—was passed, and then came the day—that dark St Bartholomew's day (some wonder what the saint did that his day should be doubly damned in ecclesiastical history)—when two thousand clergymen, the most learned ministers who had been engaged in the ministration of the Word of God, were driven from their livings and their homes into hiding in all parts of the country. Baxter went with them.* He, among others, seceded from the Church, and suffered penury and pain for what he believed to be the truth.

He was then forty-seven years of age, and bowed down with infirmity. He lived until he was seventy-five, being under the necessity during many of the latter years of life to hide himself and live in ceaseless misery. Baxter did not live alone, for, notwithstanding that he had preached against the clergy marrying, at the age of forty-seven he married Margaret Charlton. She was much younger than he was, but nevertheless they continued to live happily together, and she sustained him in his troubles, and was of much comfort to him in his latter years.

He was a grave, steady man. He spent seventy-five years without gaiety, without fancy, with very little imagination. There was scarcely a touch of poetry in him. He was a sort of prose Dante—never in *Paradiso*, but always looking on the sad side of human nature. His diseases quenched his ambition and animal appetites. Had he been a healthy man, those seventy-five years of his life might have been of a very different character.

The persecution of the Nonconformists and the impeachment and prosecution of Baxter must be referred to. He was tried by that beast, buffoon, sneak, liar, knave, bully, tyrant, blackguard, Judge Jeffreys, who sentenced him to a term of imprisonment. He called Baxter, on his trial, "blockhead," "villain," and "rogue." Even in gaol Baxter was never still, but occupied his

* Baxter had been a king's chaplain, although he had not accepted a bishopric.

time in writing the books which have made his name famous. After enduring imprisonment for some time, he was pardoned, and lived to see better days, for he saw 1688.

Baxter was an amazing believer in omens and signs, and ghosts and witches. Just then Sir Matthew Hale was adjudging witches to death, More* was preaching against them, and the learned were investigating the source of their power. As one of the Non-conformists, he may be looked upon as their chief, and as one of the greatest in their history.

The works which Baxter has left are very voluminous, and were written under all sorts of physical and other difficulties. I can recommend a perusal of them to you as the most learned metaphysical disquisitions that can be found. But his works testify more to the greatness of the workman than the greatness of the work. Take him for all in all, he was one of the greatest of literary men. No words can praise him too much, for although he was sick and weary, yet his works are a pyramid of learning, industry, and greatness, such as has seldom been matched. They are the monument of a big soul, a sickly body, and a long, learned, and laborious life.

* Henry More, an English divine and a Platonist, one of the original members of the Royal Society.

JOHN BUNYAN.

BORN 1628. DIED 1688. (FROM 3RD CHARLES I. TO 3RD JAMES II.)

PROBABLY many of you will agree with me that, having culled some of the most gorgeous flowers of modern horticulture, it is a pleasure to turn to what are called the old-fashioned stock, the flowers with the old odour, that bring up remembrances of our younger years, of school-boy days, and the cottage homes of England. Thus, while it would be perfectly possible to place before you high names, scholars, men of noble birth, yet I turn to the simple cottage flower, a native English flower, John Bunyan.

It is a curious task to investigate the life of a man, one of the most famous the world has ever had; for, with the exception of the Bible, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" has been more widely read than any other book, and has been translated into most languages; has pleased the scholar, and delighted the schoolboy; is read by the peasant, and pondered over by the divine. We are all indebted to John Bunyan for an interesting—I may say for a unique—service, the production of a pleasant Sunday book. It is as pleasant as any six-days' book in the world. There are many Sunday books that are good for the soul, as medicine is good for the stomach: nothing can be said against them, except that, like the book of the prophet of old, they are exceedingly bitter. But John Bunyan's is as pleasant a book as a man can read. A debt is to be paid to dead men as well as to the living. Bunyan was a tinker, although he wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress," and it is our duty to bring him out life-like, to show what kind of man he was, how he lived, and what quaint, strong, wise men there were in this country two centuries ago. Knowing that many of you are tolerably ignorant of the life of this glorious old tinker, in that it is pleasant to me to vindicate the rights of the laity, I have chosen to speak of this noble old layman.

I know there is a musty, mischievous proverb which says that

the cobbler should stick to his last. If it means that a man who can get his living by mending shoes should not desert that occupation to make poetry, good ; but when it is said by professional people, duly appointed, called, and consecrated, that no man can preach except he has been be-schooled and be-colleged in this place or another, I open the great book of history, and I read of improper people doing great things who ought not to have done them, lay folks who did nobler works than those who ought to have done them. I read of improper tent-makers, and poor illiterate fishermen, who did the greatest and noblest work the world ever saw. The best fighting and singing, the best preaching and writing has been done by crestless, low-born, dirty, ignoble, hard-handed people, who have what folks call "a mission" greater than the church's call ; and among the long bead-roll of such lay people is John Bunyan. He was in Bedford gaol many years, and we should remember that if Bunyan and many others had not undergone long and trying imprisonments, the people of the present day might have been unable to sit in slippered ease at their drawing-room fires. Old Mortality's task was a pleasant one, to go from kirk to kirk removing the mosses and restoring the legends on old grave-stones. So our task to-night is pleasant—that of restoring the name and the legends of a man who wrote the world's most popular book : a book that is not only wise, and true, and popular, but which actually "sells."

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a small village near the sleepy and quiet town of Bedford, in 1628, in the days of the Commonwealth, in the old fighting days of English difficulty and English liberty. A man's nature depends a great deal on the atmosphere in which he is born. Bunyan came into life when the greatest struggle in which this land has been engaged was about to begin ; when the incapable and wicked Stuarts were trying to the utmost the patience of the people ; when Puritanism and Republicanism were about to teach their material doctrines upon this soil. His father was a tinker, and Bunyan took to the hereditary trade. He was brought up in the grim and bitter order of God-fearing puritanism. His father was a just, severe, Bible-reading, much-praying man, a thorough-paced Puritan, a lover of religious liberty. Bunyan tinkered his kettles in a pious atmosphere, growing up troubled with questions and doubts all too soon. About his boy-

hood we read but little. His father was among the poorest in the land, and he gave John a poor education accordingly. What he did learn he mainly forgot, so that it came to the same thing in the end, as if he had never had any education at all.

And here I must remark that one peculiarity attends all the biographies of Tinker John. The child in the tale asked where the sinners were buried when it found all the grave-stones in a church-yard eloquent in praise of those that lay around. So all other biographers say whatever of good they can string together of the men whose lives they pourtray. About John Bunyan, however, the only discussion has been how "bad" he was; whether he was, as Southey said, "merely a blackguard," or whether he was not a sad, graceless, outrageous rip, licentious and sinful. There are two parties in that debate; one taking all Bunyan's self-accusing as true, and the other denying it. But there are also two courts: the court of God's law, or Conscience; and the court of man's law, or Public Opinion. The Apostle Paul was, he said, "the chief of sinners;" yet if they had taken him before a magistrate on that charge, he could have rebutted it by proof; but in the other court, the court of conscience, he would have fully admitted it. Now, many of John Bunyan's bitter speeches against himself as boy and young man may be interpreted in that way.

People sometimes get angry if they have a faithful portrait of a man before he was "converted;" but it is desirable to know how bad a man has been in order to glorify the grace which has made him better. Bunyan, in the outset of his career, was not a very bad man in some senses—that is, he did not come before the magistrates; and when he vilifies himself, according to the fashion of some good people, we must take a little off from his vilification. He called himself a "Jerusalem sinner," and we have a piece of autobiography from his pen, entitled "God's Grace to the Chiefest of Sinners." But a drunkard he never was; licentious, in the common meaning of the term, he was not. He was nothing more than an ordinary, ignorant country lad. I defend him against himself. He was not the low besotted reprobate that he declared himself to be.

Bunyan had about him the best and the worst parts of old Puritanism. There are some who say that the early part of his

life was marked by the most open and daring profligacy; but when accused of being a gross sinner, he, judging himself by the court of conscience, stoutly denied it. He catalogued his shortcomings. He said he was a "town-swearer"—a sort of pattern swearer—that he cursed and swore bitterly. It is certain that Bunyan was at one time a fearful fellow to curse and swear; so much so, that the worst woman in Bedford said he was enough to corrupt the whole town. Whatever Bunyan did, he did it with all his might; so that when he swore he swore awfully, and good people were in the habit of saying, "You swear as bad as tinker Bunyan." Again, in after times, when he wrote concerning himself, it was (as has been said) as the "chiefest of sinners;" but, though he thus described himself, it is not for others to use such language regarding him. What men say about themselves before God is very different from what they would say about themselves before their fellow-men; and though Paul called himself the chief of sinners before his Maker, in the eyes of men he was the chief of saints. It is a different event, a different tribunal altogether; and those men are not to be condemned as hypocrites, as they often are condemned, who speak in disparagement of themselves before God, yet who claim a favourable consideration from their fellow-creatures.

Bunyan had a tender conscience and an ignorant mind. He was a noisy, disorderly, ranting kind of rip. That he said of himself; but you must remember that in those times playing at cricket and lying were often regarded as breaking part of the same tables. That was Puritanism. They had two tables of commandments that Moses gave, and twenty more of their own, to which they demanded the same respect. Hence I find that Bunyan's conscience was as much wounded by playing at "hockey" and by Sunday bell-ringing, as by profane swearing. His love for bell-ringing was no great sin. I like a good peal of bells myself; not that solitary bell that is so often heard calling people to church—*that* is enough to give anyone the horrors who comes within its sound—but I like to hear a good peal of bells. But Bunyan, his "conscience beginning to be tender," thought his bell-ringing was a vain and wicked practice, and he therefore forced himself to leave it. Yet, he says, his mind hankered. But one day, when he went to the steeple-house to ring, he began

to think, "How if one of the bells should fall?" "Then," he says, "I chose to stand under a main beam that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking that here I might stand sure; but then I thought again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then, rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand at the steeple door. And now, I thought, I am safe enough; for if the bell should now fall I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding." So after this he would still go to see them ring, but would not go any further than the steeple door. But then it came into his head, "How if the steeple itself should fall?" "This thought," he says, "did so continually shake my mind that I durst not stand at the steeple door any longer, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head."

There are one or two principles to be borne in mind previous to opening that rare old book, "Bunyan's Autobiography." All autobiography is valuable. It gives an inward view of man's life, and is infinitely preferable to all the laboured panegyrics which the biographers of ordinary great men can heap upon them. If you read the book I have named, you will see Bunyan at once, and find that he was one of those enthusiasts whom some call fanatics and some madmen; who hear suggestions, as they believe, from visible, tangible forms around their beds; and to whom it is in vain to say they do not see them, for they verily and firmly believe that they do.

At an early period Bunyan was seized with an incessant torment of soul. He was one of those who believed that the world rested on awful darkness and terrible mysteries; that God was a reality, not a doctrine; that the fire of hell was as real as the fire upon his hearth, the heavens as certain and real as the distant Indies. Like Luther, the first years of his life were spent in fighting devils. He *saw* the devil, not with iris and pupil, but in a more terrible way—with the eyes of the soul. Even the Bible was to him a torment for a time. He made every text a demon. He minded no punctuation; he took scraps of the book everywhere, without reference to its literary meaning. These things remembered, Bunyan's speeches may be better understood. No event occurred that a special providence did not act with reference to him. Even his dreams were real to him. Thus he spake of one of these awful

visitings: "At another time I dreamed that I was in a pleasant place, living in riot and luxury, banqueting and feasting my senses, when, on a sudden, even in a moment, a mighty earthquake rent the earth in sunder, and out of the wide and dreadful gap came bloody and amazing flames, and in those flames the figures of men tossed up in globes of fire, and falling down again, with horrid shrieks, and cries, and execrations, whilst some devils that were mingled with them laughed loud at their torments. And whilst I stood, trembling at this affrighting vision, I thought the earth shook under me, and a circle of flame enclosed me. But when I thought myself just at the point of perishing, one in white shining raiment descended and plucked me out of that dreadful place, whilst the devils cried after me to leave me with them, that I might receive the just punishment my sins had deserved; yet I escaped the danger." He tells us that, even before he was nine years old, his childish sins "did so offend the Lord, that He did scare and frighten me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with fearful visions. For often, after I have spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid. Also, I should at these years be greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire; still fearful that it would be my lot to be found at last among those devils and hellish fiends who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of darkness unto the judgment day." Later on, one of his dreams so haunted and frightened him, that he thought his breastbone was bursting. The old curses of God were of course immediately attached to it, and he said directly, "This is Judas Iscariot's fate." One Sunday, when he was playing at "cat," having struck it one blow from the hole, just as he was about to strike it the second time, he heard a voice—a voice so real that he turned on one side the better to hear it—crying out, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?" He turned, and saw Christ in the heavens, looking down upon him as being displeased, and severely threatening him with some grievous punishment for his ungodly practices. Some of you smile. Now, what I hate is to see petty, small-headed, sentimental people affect to despise and sneer at great

men. Would you sneer at the life of St Paul? And yet he too called himself the "chief of sinners," and he too saw a vision of Christ.

Bunyan had the Bible, and at first used it like a fool—he took half texts; and this, with his tender conscience and his ignorance, made him wretched indeed. He was all light one day, when he came on a text of beauty in Solomon's Song; and he was miserable another day, because he happened upon another verse in St Luke. But now he fell into the company of a poor man, who induced him to read the Bible more diligently; and, naturally enough, he turned to the historical part, to the history of the Kings of Judah. He became a reformed character, and showed great alteration in his life and manners. But he was not "converted."

There was a strange, deep, and terrible struggle through which that poor human soul passed before it emerged into the sunlight, and before there was written that map of the soul's progress which will last mankind to the day of doom. He was troubled about the doctrine of Election, that deep question with which all earnest men have struggled one day in their lives, that doctrine which is not to be learned at chapel, not to be explained by saying it is only a doctrine. Why, there is election going on on every side of us; we see it every day. But Bunyan was much exercised about the number of the elect. He had doubts as to whether the *Bedfordshire* elect were made up, in much the same manner as he would as to whether the Bedfordshire Militia had their full complement of men. Two years and a half thus passed, with wrestling of body and soul; with groans, and cries, and tears; with actual and visible fightings with devils, and bandying of texts damnatory and consolatory.

Bunyan once got such great comfort from a text which came into his mind after he had been many weeks oppressed, that he says it was as if it talked with him. Thus he continued for about a year, not doubting but that it was a text out of the canonical Scriptures. But when, at last, happening to cast his eye upon the apocryphal books, he found it *there*, oh! the horror that scared him! The text soon lost all its virtue. Of course, if I were to quote the text to *you*, the result would be very different in *your* case. Of course, you all have the Apocrypha, and your acquaintance with it is such that you would not be likely to be misled.

But with Bunyan it was different. To him, the Apocrypha was a forbidden book.

By degrees the darkness was broken, and the clouds began to pass away from Bunyan's mind ; he read the Scriptures more profitably ; his former evil habits were left off, and he began to see his way more clearly. He finally concluded that, as there were no data by which to determine the question of Election, the best way was for each man to make his calling and election sure in his own way. But he had much to pass through yet, and it cost him many struggles to pierce the clouds of ignorance and doubtfulness that beset him.

At nineteen he entered the army, and you know which side he would take in the contest. He took the solemn epic side, not the ditty and lyrical part. He was drawn to go to the siege of Leicester, but when he was just ready, a comrade desired to go in his stead. He consented. That comrade was shot in the head by a musket-bullet, and thus Bunyan had a "miraculous escape." He had had three hair-breadth 'scapes before ; twice during the early part of his life he was in imminent danger of drowning, and on another occasion he was, through his own rashness, in danger of being killed by an adder. These things made a great impression on his mind. He became a moral, though not yet a religious man. He thought to test his faith by working a miracle, and one day, as he was between Elstow and Bedford, he came to a puddle in the road, and the temptation came to him to command the puddle to dry up. He said to himself, "If the puddle dries up, I shall be saved, and if not, I shall be damned." But he had his misgivings about risking his salvation on his power, so he considered a minute, and thought he would pray first, and work the miracle afterwards, which resulted in his not working the miracle at all. He would rather let his damnation hang upon an uncertainty, than try to settle it in that way.

Soon after this he heard three or four poor women talking of the Gospel in one of the streets of Bedford. He gave ear to them, and they opened up light to him. He went to hear preaching, but it tormented him. His conscience was continually crying out. He could not cut a stick, or stoop for a pin ; he could not eat his food or look upon anything, but a voice cried to him, "Sell Christ for this." Thus the demon cried ever, "Sell Christ for that ; sell

Him, sell Him, sell Him." If he ran away, "Sell Him, sell Him;" the cry was still in his ears. But he was struggling out of Despond. He told these poor old women of his troubles, and they took him to Mr Gifford, a poor preacher in Bedford, and a man himself of strange history, who from persecuting the Puritans had become their apostle; a man well fitted to deal with Bunyan's scruples. Bunyan listened to his preaching, and the turmoil of his soul was calmed.

He progressed into church fellowship among the Baptists, and, as his graces grew, some of the members of the church discovered that Brother Bunyan had a gift—a gift to preach. They told him so. But Bunyan declined. *He*—a "Jerusalem sinner" like *him*—preach? He counted himself unworthy to preach the Gospel of Christ; for he considered that he had committed a sin equal to that of Judas, and had "sold Christ." At length, after much entreaty, they persuaded him to try, not before the congregation at first of course, but in private, before the elect and select, to see if he was "sound." He tried and succeeded. He had not been fashioned at Oxford or Cambridge, but he had half of the preacher's furniture in himself—he had a heart that knew man, and that tested the things of life. Those about him had known what impressions he could make upon them, and that he was the very man for the preacher's office. Paul was set to preach immediately after the striking event which occurred on the way to Damascus; and so, when tinker Bunyan was changed into church-member Bunyan, they thought him fit to preach at once. After his first trial, Brother John Bunyan was set apart as a preacher of the Word. There was no going to sleep under honest John. He positively laid hold of the heart. He was of the race of preachers who are like eavesdroppers. He knew all about his hearers, and could turn them inside out, so well could he sound the inmost depths of the human heart. On one occasion two thousand Londoners were drawn from their beds at seven o'clock in the winter's morning to hear tinker Bunyan. What preacher could work such a miracle now? He was able to pour balm into the wounds of others, because he had balm poured into his own wounds.

It was now that he commenced to write poetry; but he had better have let it alone, for he was not much of a poet.

But before that, at the age of nineteen, poor as he was, John

Bunyan married. He and this woman came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a trencher or a spoon between them. She had for her dowry (think of it!) two books—rare things in those times. One was “*The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven*,” and the other was “*The Practice of Piety*,” which her father had left her when he died. These were but dry rods, but they were given to a man who had power to make them blossom as the rose; and they ultimately blossomed into that glorious book, “*The Pilgrim’s Progress*.” It is a question whether Bunyan would ever have written the “*Progress*,” if his wife had not brought as her marriage portion “*The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven*.” What could she have brought him better? If she had had three hundred pounds, of what good would the money have been now? It would have disappeared long, long since; but she brought him the “*Pathway to Heaven*,” and he set about inditing the pilgrim’s progress to that goal. His wife was a godly, well-conditioned woman, who bore him several children.

Bunyan was, then, a preacher. Episcopacy had raised its head again, and they used their first day of liberty to repay the insults of Cromwell’s time—glorious time, of which the worst that can be said is that it was a day of psalm singing and Bible reading; while the best that can be said of the time that followed is, that it was an age of fiddlers, buffoons, strumpets, and all sinners. In that day, the godly old Nonconformists were done even to death. Eight thousand men died in prison during that old blackguard Charles II.’s reign. And under what banner? the right of private judgment. Under what rallying cry? the right of reading the Bible. When next there is any stone-throwing, let us remember the eight thousand martyrs who died in that time—the time of stupid, bullying magistrates, of wicked insolent priests.

Bunyan’s first essay at preaching was in the kitchen of Samselhamlet, Bedford. You might see him out there, in the garden, under the pear-tree, having what preachers call “five minutes to himself,” to arrange his heads and so forth, before he begins his sermon. Well, after five years of preaching, he got into trouble. He was warned against his preaching, and told that a warrant was out against him. He was informed that a constable was on the scent, and would soon arrive to arrest him, but that did not daunt him; he walked about the orchard, meditating and debating whether he should run away or preach. He at last determined

that he dared not run, and that it was his duty to preach, for he thought, "If the shepherd runs, what will the sheep do?" So the brave, hearty, stalwart soul returned to the kitchen and began the meeting; he did preach, and the constable came in and arrested him in the king's name—in the name of that fag-end of a worthless dynasty, Charles II.—and he was taken before a stupid, grammar-breaking, illogical magistrate, such as were common in those days, and are not quite extinct in the present time—a tyrannical, purse-proud man, a bully and a dunce, a thoroughbred debauchee, but great among the magnates of the county—and the indictment was read: "That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, labourer, hath devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and is the common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, and contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the king."

Ay, here was the secret of the arrest. He might have been as heretical as he pleased if nobody went to hear him; but adding to heresy success was adding insult to injury—a thing not to be borne. That was what brought down on Bunyan so bitter a fate. It was in that day reckoned a sin not to go to the parish church. In our day we have heard of it, but it was worse in the time of Bunyan. On being asked whether he would cease to preach, and would attend church, he quietly replied, "No, I must preach, and I cannot attend church." He was asked if he would give sureties, and told he would then be released. The sureties were to be bound over to keep him from preaching, and if he did preach again their bonds were to be forfeited. But he would not consent to this. Bunyan said he could not give up preaching, as it was a matter of conscience with him. "Conscience," said the magistrate; "now none of your Puritan French here!" I suppose he had never heard the word before, and so he thought it was a bit of French Bunyan had picked up. The magistrate pointed out to him the consequences that would follow if he persisted in preaching, but Bunyan preferred to go to jail rather than give in, although he knew that it meant separation from his wife and poor children. He was especially concerned about his poor blind child, of whom he said, "She lay naxrer my heart than all beside." "Oh," he said, "the thoughts of the hardship my poor blind one mast go under will break my heart to pieces." "Poor child," he

thought, "what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, must beg, must suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee." But yet, recalling himself, he thought, "I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you." "Oh," he said afterwards, "I saw in this condition I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the heads of his wife and children; yet I must do it, I must do it." So to jail he went, to Bedford jail, on that sluggish river Ouse. He was sent there for a month, with an intimation that if he did not conform, he would be banished.

Jails in those days were very different to what they are now. Now, if I go to prison, I have a chaplain to look after my spiritual welfare, a barber to shave me and to cut my hair, the best of plain food cooked in the best possible manner, and I am weighed to see how heavy I am. But Bunyan was thrust into prison under different conditions. He remained in Bedford Jail twelve years.

Here he tried his hand at poetry, a specimen of which will give you an illustration of his illiteracy, and show you the style in which the future author of the admirable "Pilgrim's Progress" began to write. The verses he wrote in his copy of "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" under certain woodcuts—verses worthy of any of Catnach's sheets published*—might be quoted. Thus, under the print of an owl appearing to a Council held by Pope John at Rome :

" Doth the Owle to them appear,
Which putt them all into a fear ;
Will not the man trubel crown'd
Cast the Owle unto the ground."

Under the martyrdom of John Rogers, the protomartyr in the Marian Persecution, he wrote :

" It was the will of X (Christ) that thou should die,
Mr Rogers his body in the flames to fry.
O blessed man ! thou did lead this bloody way,
O how wilt thou shien with X in the last day."

You will see from this that Bunyan was made a scholar in jail,

* "Old Jemmy Catnach," of the *Seven Dials*, printer, publisher, toy-book manufacturer, dying speech merchant, and ballad-monger.

wherein many a man has ripened. That jail was the university in which he studied and graduated. For twelve long years he lay in that damp, dark, Bedford prison, and that is time enough for a good curriculum. He was laid up there to mellow, and that it was which gave him such a fine autumnal tint before he came out. When he went to Bedford prison, Bunyan was like a green apple, but they hung him up on the walls, so to speak, and he became mellowed and sweetened, wise, peaceful, and gracious. He was an ignorant though a god-fearing man when he entered, but he came out a wise man, a lover of peace, the possessor of a catholic soul, and altogether a gentle, apostolic kind of man. Bedford jail, then, was the place in which a good man ripened, and a great book was written.

Bunyan had a good-tempered jailor during a great part of the time, who used to let him out sometimes, and even occasionally let him go home to spend a night. He always came back at the appointed hour; he would have made an appointment with death, and have kept it sacredly. On one of these occasions a remarkable circumstance occurred. Bunyan was at home, and in bed, but could not sleep; he lay restless and tumbling about, and became very uneasy. At length he told his wife that he felt constrained to return to the jail, he did not know why, but he felt he must go back at once. No entreaties could detain him; he acted upon his feelings, and returned to his prison. He had not returned long, when a messenger arrived suddenly from London, who called up the jailor, and demanded if all his prisoners were safe. "Yes," he said. He asked him again if he was quite sure. He said, "Yes." Then he asked him if *Bunyan* was safe, and he answered, "Yes." So the authorities had got to know that Bunyan had been allowed to go out, and wanted to prove it, and this they could have done, had not Bunyan returned when he did. Now, what do you call that? A "strange coincidence," perhaps; or you may attribute the fact to John having eaten something at supper which disagreed with him, and prevented his sleeping. I think differently, but I cannot stop to explain further: those who like may stick to their coincidence or their "supper." I must be permitted to adhere to my own impression. Bunyan went so far as to preach occasionally, when he was thus temporarily out of prison. They let his blind child go into the jail to him every day, which was a great comfort

to him. He said that his sunshine departed when those dark orbs left him every night. The great womanly heart of that bold daring man thought constantly of his wife and children at home, and of the poor blind one that "lay nearest his heart," and for them in prison he was almost tempted to sell his soul. He took to work at laces and making tags, to keep them from starvation.

There, too, in prison, he wrote his "Pilgrim's Progress." The prison work of mankind, though a painful thing, is yet great and glorious—a theme with many grand recollections. During Bunyan's tedious imprisonment, what books had he? Only two. There was a Bible, which is a whole library in itself—history, prophecy, poetry, ethics—and there was Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the reading of which book prepared Bunyan for writing the "Vanity Fair" of his "Pilgrim's Progress." Quaint Thomas Fuller said he did not judge of the hospitality of a house by the number of chimneys it had, but by the number he saw *smoking*, so, after all, it is not the number of books a man has, but those he reads, masters, digests, makes part of himself, which determines their value to him.

The first book Bunyan wrote during his imprisonment was "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners." Now, I suspect that many of you have never read this little book—never *seen* it, perhaps. If this is so, let me recommend you to get it, and read it through. *There's* a book for you to read next Sunday afternoon. "Grace Abounding" was the prelude to Bunyan's famous "Pilgrim's Progress," which shows so truly the inner life of a man passing through this world to the one beyond. Who of us has not read that book with rapture? I should like to see the portrait of the oddity who has not read the "Pilgrim's Progress." It is written in plain, Saxon language, such as all can understand. If you invite me to dinner, I don't want you to ask if you shall "assist" me to meat, or if I will "patronise" your dish. No, no; speak plainly, "Will you have some beef?" This book is written so plainly, simply, and true to nature that a sentence means almost a volume, and we find ourselves quoting from it constantly, as we do from Shakespeare. As an instance, I am going from here, we will say, to some distant city where you have a son living. You are naturally anxious as to his welfare, progress, and so forth, and you ask me to make some inquiries about

him. I have not much time to write a long letter, so I say, " He is beneath the walls of Doubting Castle : " or, " He is in the grip of Giant Despair : " or, " He is passing through the streets of Vanity Fair : " or, " He is in the Valley of Humiliation ; " or, " He has caught sight of the gate of the City from the top of the Delectable Mountains." And Bunyan's characters, too, are alive to-day—Mr Ready-to-halt, Mr By-ends, Mr Facing-both-ways, Mr Two-tongues, Mr Hold-the-world, Mr Love-gain, and so on.

Besides his " Grace Abounding " and " Pilgrim's Progress," Bunyan wrote several other treatises while in prison—" The Holy War," " Christian Behaviour," " The Resurrection of the Dead," &c. I recommend you to read them all.

About this time a large number of Quakers were lingering their lives away in the jails of this country. An equal number of able-bodied Quakers offered to go and take their places in jail, so that they might be released : but they were not allowed to do it. No substitute was offered or accepted for Bunyan. After a confinement of about twelve years and a half, he was, however, at length set free : not by Bishop Barlow, as some have said, but by one of the noble company of the Society of Friends. This was a generous act : for Bunyan had attacked them in controversy with bitter coarseness. For once in his life Charles the Second deviated into gratitude. Eight thousand God-fearing Englishmen languished their lives out in jail during his reign : but he once went out of his way as a token of thankfulness for what was called the " crowning mercy of Worcester." Some Quakers had been able to render him a service, and, finding him in the humour, they induced him to grant his royal signature for the release of a number of persons then in prison. The worthy Quakers put John Bunyan on the list, for they did not confine it to " broad brims."

Bunyan found his household affairs in sad disorder, and he gave up tinkering and took to preaching. That man knew his Bible well, and he knew that other book well ;—that book with red covers and which is red all through—the human heart ;—so he could not fail to make a good preacher. Sixteen years of his life were given to preaching.

After he got popular, many charges were brought against him by ignorant and malicious people. They called him a wizard, a Jesuit, a highwayman, and said that he was licentious with

women. To all of which charges he affirmed he could only say, "God knows that I am innocent." And what should he say, he asked, to those who had thus bespattered him? Should he threaten them? chide them? flatter them? entreat them to hold their tongues? No, not he. "My foes," he said, "have missed their mark in thus shooting at me. I am not the man. I wish that they themselves were guiltless. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged up by the neck till they were dead, I, John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well."

And *thus*, again, Bunyan ungallantly repelled one of these charges—"In this," said he, "I admire the wisdom of God, that He made me shy of women, from my first conversion until now. These know, and can also bear me witness, with whom I have been most intimately concerned, that it is a rare thing to see me carry it pleasantly towards a woman; the common salutation of women I abhor, it is odious to me in whomsoever I see it. Their company alone, I cannot away with; I seldom so much as touch a woman's hand, for I think these things are not so becoming me. When I have seen good men salute those women that they have visited, or that have visited them, I have at times made my objections against it; and when they have answered, that it was but a piece of civility, I have told them, 'It is not a comely sight.' Some, indeed, have urged the 'holy kiss;' but then I have asked why they made baulks, why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favoured go? Thus, how laudable soever such things have been in the eyes of others, they have been unseemly in my sight." That was not churlishness—he was twice married—but distrust of himself. It was not want of feeling; for remember the little blind child that "lay nearest his heart." But he had a thorough contempt for those empty-headed, milk-and-water dandies, dangling ever after women, summed up in the lines—

"A dandy is a man that would
Be a woman if he could,
But as he can't, does all he can
To show the world he's not a man."

And although Bunyan was a writer and a preacher, he had a good deal of the tinker left in him; so when good men talked to him about "holy kisses," he asked, with a twinkle in his eye that was

left from the tinker—"How is it, then, that only the young and pretty ones are kissed?"

Thus Bunyan repelled all the vile charges brought against him. For one of his foes he prayed thus: "O Lord, convert him from the error of his ways; but if he be not converted, O Lord, be pleased to lay Thine hand heavily upon him." They called him ugly names. Well, what of that? That is the common way of putting a man down at the present day; just as a country squire once called me "Atheist" and "Baptist" in the same breath.

At length, when sixty years old, John Bunyan, one of the greatest of writers and the sublimest of allegorists, died in London in 1688, and was buried in the old frowsy churchyard of Bunhill Fields, that great burying ground of Nonconformity, where Daniel Defoe and Isaac Watts now rest. A tombstone to his memory may still be seen. I advise you, next time you visit London, to go and see it. The last act of his life was one of peace-making—an endeavour to reconcile a father to his erring son. Taking cold during his return journey, he was seized with a violent rheumatic fever, from which he died.

Of his love for his family I have spoken, but he was more concerned for their spiritual than merely for their temporal welfare. He was once told that a gentleman in London, a very wealthy citizen, would take his son Joseph as an apprentice, without any premium, which might be a great means to advance him; but he declined this liberal proposal, saying, "God did not send me to advance my family, but to advance His gospel."

Though he never became a scholar, yet the greatest men that have lived since his day have borne testimony to his genius and his worth. Whom shall we call to hold the canopy over his head? Southey, Johnson, Coleridge, Macaulay. All these have borne testimony to his merits. The tinker has had his robes borne by these men, and nothing is much more wonderful in literature. Dr Johnson, you know, had no high opinion of the Puritans, and yet he had a very high opinion of Bunyan. As an instance of his dislike to the Puritans,—One day Johnson went on a visit to a friend of his, and found him in the garden picking up snails and throwing them over the fence into his neighbour's garden. Johnson remonstrated with him, and said that was hardly the thing; but on being told in an undertone that the neighbour was

a Puritan, he said, "Oh, well, throw away then, throw away!" But of Bunyan he had a very high opinion, and ranked his "Pilgrim's Progress" among "the very few books indeed of which the reader, when he comes to the conclusion, wishes they had been longer." That was well remarked. The word "finis" at the end of a book is generally a happy consummation. When I read the little words, "the end," I almost invariably say, "So be it," with all my heart. But that is not the case with the "Progress." It is not only too short, but the book can be read again and again. Johnson allows it a high place among the works of original genius. Coleridge also—a ripe scholar—said a man read the work three times; once, as a boy, for the story; second, as a theologian, for its doctrines; third, as a man and a scholar, for its style and writing. And when posterity has decreed that a man or a book shall be popular, you need not trouble anything further about it; they will take care of that.

To praise Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" were an idleness. It is a book beyond all praise. The world has loved it, the world still loves it, and that is sufficient. His was a wonderful task when he wrote the "Progress," for what had he to do? He had to render into outward and visible forms the subtle and strong passions of individual internal life. Such a process is like catching a cloud and making it permanent, or like turning a thought into a thing. But John Bunyan has done it. In this work he has taken the hidden things of the interior life and put them into words, as an artist puts them on canvas; and there are no pictures better. "They are homely," you say. So much the better. And what realism there is about them! There are so many characters in the book that those whom he addresses are pretty sure to find themselves in it. As a theological work it is admirable. Its Calvinism—I don't know where anybody not a theologian could get a better view of Calvinism than here. It is Calvinism in its singing robes, with a smile on its face, and with some flesh and blood put into it.

But while Bunyan lends the stiff and chill John Calvin what he has not—love; while he sets John Calvin to music—Bunyan's style is sterling and uncompromising. Read not Addison or Johnson; read Bunyan, who employed direct and true, and none of your drawing-room, English. The "Pilgrim's Progress" is

remarkable for its mastery of the English language. The man who would speak good English should take to his company the authorised version of the Bible and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Bunyan's is chapel English, man's English, woman's English, the English spoken everywhere by the native sons and daughters of the soil. It is none of your finical, white-gloved, cau-de-cologned English, but true English, bold, tough, firm, not to be mistaken. The "Pilgrim's Progress" is a book of old Saxon language, of theology, of rhetoric, of poetry, of romance—for all ages and for all faiths. There Calvin's theology best appears, and although I cannot agree with everything in that creed, yet I cannot forget that it was a stout, manful, noble creed, that took the rose-pink sentimentalism out of a man, that bred men, trained giants, and brought forth heroes.

Southey also describes Bunyan well; and Macaulay said, writing of the period in which they lived, that the only two men of large creative genius in that age were Milton and Bunyan. His "Holy War" is not equal to his "Pilgrim's Progress." A man cannot write two books equally good. Writing a first book is something like first love. Second love may be a decent, tolerable sort of love enough; but it is not like first love; nor is a second book, generally speaking, at all comparable with the first. Bunyan *poured himself* into his first book; in the second book he mixed some criticisms also. In regard to Bunyan's Sermons, I cannot say that I have got on very well with them myself. They are bad to manage. But they have one good old merit, they are of sufficient *length*, having been preached in the days of the hour-glass. "There were giants in those days," who preached by the hour-glass, turning it up to run a second hour after one had been consumed in speaking.

I have described the "Pilgrim's Progress" as a "paying" book. One hundred thousand copies of it were published before its author died, and countless thousands since; for of a hundred persons who can read now, about one could read in Bunyan's time. The work has been translated into at least twenty-five different languages, even Rome having its edition of the "Pilgrim," with the great Pope left out. John Bunyan is a strong example of what education can do for a man of original genius, although he never knew what education was in the ordinary acceptation of the term.

DANIEL DEFOE.

BORN 1661. DIED 1731. (FROM 2ND CHARLES II. TO 4TH GEORGE II.)

I AM going to set before you to-night a man to whom very seldom justice is done. It is sometimes a man's misfortune to have done one thing so exceedingly well, that people forget all the rest of his works ; and I am sorry to say of many English people that all they know of Defoe is that he wrote "Robinson Crusoe." Considering that he was one of the most voluminous of our writers ; the greatest political pamphleteer, with one exception, we ever had ; the truest-hearted and most plucky defender of liberty ; and the writer of many books as great as "Robinson Crusoe," it is hardly fair that he should go down to posterity with so very simple an epitaph as "Here lies Daniel Defoe, who wrote 'Robinson Crusoe.'" Nothing could be easier than to prove every one of you to be debtors to Defoe. To the reading of "Robinson Crusoe" you owe the happiest moments of your school-days. You preferred it far before the grammar-learning which the pedagogue said was good for your spirits ; you were lost in wonderment at the story, and in days long after have pondered deeply how one could rub over fiction such an air of truth. But, as I am certain some of you know very little more about Defoe than that he wrote that strange story, we are met to-night to pay a debt of honour to him, for the pleasure he brought us in our youth.

But in Defoe's case there are other reasons. The villain of one generation sometimes turns out to be the hero of another. Men pointed at with bitter sneers in their own day, get monuments by-and-bye ; and as Defoe had the honour of the pillory, of going to prison, being barked at by fools, brayed at by asses of every sort, persecuted by the Church, and shunned by Dissent, it becomes us to see whether or no we can join in the verdict of the high priests who put him in the pillory, or whether we would not rather honour

the man who stood there. Hence, I want to show you what *character* Defoe had.

Of course, I am not here to defend Defoe's opinions, because if I did that it would be impossible for some of you to enjoy the story, for what Defoe had to say he said with remarkable plainness. The views he took were always of the strongest, and generally a long way before the crowd, and therefore very little likely to be pleasing to all. There is, however, a wide difference between stating a man's views historically, and defending them controversially. To tell all the facts of that man's life were a long task. In brief, there was not a squabble he had not a finger in. He carried his pen as some men carried their swords in the olden time, ready to leap into any quarrel. He loved a row dearly for its own sake ; but he always took the side of truth, and fought the battle out. Whether he had courts with him or not, there he was, ready to plunge into the controversy of right, of liberty in the Church, and freedom in the State.

As Defoe wrote two hundred and ten pamphlets and books, you will excuse me from describing them all. It were half-an-hour's work to give even the title-pages, which in those times were often works in themselves, setting out the author's life, giving his motives and reasons, the why and the wherefore. Let us consider how different in character are his books—how grave are some, how little serious others ; how loose are some, how studiously correct are others. To understand this problem, it is necessary to look at his ancestry:

Defoe, or Foe—whether we account it a misfortune or no—was not able to trace his pedigree beyond his grandfather ; but that was something : everybody hasn't a grandfather. This grandfather was a jolly old Cavalier, well to do, who did not much care for politics. He was fond of field-sports, and kept a pack of hounds, calling them after the generals on both sides—Goring and Waller, Fairfax and Cromwell, equally careless which might prove himself the better. Sometimes grandfathers crop out in grandchildren, and this good old fellow Foe was well represented in young Daniel. They caught him more than once after the hounds, and sometimes on the race-course, which made his dissenting friends rather shy of him—those who could not blend very well the Old Hundredth with the "view halloo" of the huntsman. You must

remember, then, that some of his grandfather's blood got into Daniel Defoe; for you will be at a loss if you do not keep that fact in view in considering his life. His father, James Foe, butcher and Dissenter, was a very different person. He kept no dog; or, if he did, it was a butcher's dog. He was a Dissenter of the grave sort—grim, godly, God-fearing—not mirth-provoking; an excellent man, but not lively; a backbone Dissenter—one from principle and conscience, not by pedigree and accident; not because it was "better to reign in hell than serve in heaven;" not because he would rather be the big man of the Meeting than the nobody of the Church. To him Dissent was the marrow of religion; and he inculcated into the son a goodly share of it. Put the grandfather and father together, and from this singular cross the strange character of Daniel Defoe may be explained. Where he got the wonder-working De I cannot tell. There is some doubt about it—but I am rather afraid we are all fooled at times, and that Daniel Foe added the De in order to sink the paternal offal in Defoe. This is of little consequence; everybody knows it is quite allowable for anybody to take any name or title he likes. Other folks do it; and therefore we cannot very well take up Foe, the butcher's son, for it. Daniel Foe—Daniel Defoe! What a world of wealth it adds!

Daniel was born in 1661, in St Giles's, Cripplegate. We know little of his youthful days. As a boy he was a fighter, full of courage, as in after life. In childhood, he did not learn much, except this—never to strike an enemy when he is down—a rule he followed through life. From boxing boys he got to thrashing kings and rulers, not with the fist, but with that fierce, trenchant, witty pen of his.

He was flung upon the world during the reign of Charles the Second, of which no better thing can be said than that it was the reign of strumpets *vice* the reign of Saints. At that time the Popery fever set in—the incoming of the "Scarlet Woman," &c.,—and the news went forth that very soon Smithfield fires were to be relighted. Dissent, full of fear, whispered that very soon there would be no Bibles in England. Whereupon young Defoe set about copying his Bible out in shorthand. Daniel worked like a horse until he had written out the whole of the Pentateuch. He then grew so weary that he gave it up, and expressed himself

“willing to risk the rest.” Don’t let us be too hard on poor Daniel: not many of you would copy even the Pentateuch in shorthand. An old commentator said “that this was an employment indifferently suited to a gentleman of lively spirits, who cannot be supposed to have had the strong feeling that actuated elder people.”

I admire the boy’s pluck in getting through the Pentateuch, but I am glad he did not get to the end of Revelation. He would have been too good for this world if he had accomplished that. He should be praised for what he did, and more for what he failed to do.

In course of time, when he left school, young Defoe, intended for the Dissenting ministry, was promoted to an academy of the Dissenters, to prepare him for his future work. It was the same academy in which Samuel Wesley, the father of the more celebrated John, got his education, and, curiously enough, which he afterwards abused. It was not a place where mild divinity and spotless neckcloths were alone cultivated; it was where freedom was taught as a faith, and liberty as a creed. This was what Wesley called a nursery of sedition. To one of these nurseries, then, at Newington Green, over which the Rev. Charles Morton, a ripe scholar, was placed, Defoe was sent, and here he acquired his knowledge. Defoe—his father a butcher, and he himself subsequently a seller of stockings—was very naturally jealous of his own learning. The easiest way of putting him out was to intimate that he was not a scholar. One of his chief depreciators at the academy was a Mr Tutchin—a man he more than once squabbled with in after life—who taunted him with his origin. Everybody has his Tutchin! And Defoe challenged him in the following terms:

“As to my little learning and this man’s great capacities, I fairly challenge him to translate with me any Latin, French, and Italian author, and afterwards to translate them each crossways, for the sum of £20 each book; and by this he shall have an opportunity to show before the world how much Daniel Defoe, hosier, is inferior to Mr Tutchin, gentleman.”

This showed his learning. He did not offer to simply translate Latin or French into English, but Latin into French, French into Italian, and so forth.

From some cause or other, Defoe soon left the academy. Thus was the young theologian pitched into the time of Charles the Second, a time when Dissenters were driven hither and thither like cattle.

There is no need to sketch the state of English manners at that period, when drunkenness was looked upon as an accomplishment, and the fewness of the commandments a man kept as a sign of common sense. It was at this time that this man, trained in godliness, brought up in strictness, his father a Dissenter, stepped forth into the light, fairly equipped, able to speak, able to write, and able deeply to think. He began very soon to write, and his pen was ever ready in the cause of right. Large and small, his works are so numerous that we cannot now go through them, but will take those most characteristic of the man and men of the time.

The Test Act came up,* and was much opposed by the Dissenters, chief among whom was Alderman Loves. In an open speech, he said: "I had much rather see the Dissenters suffer by rigour of the law, though I suffer with them, than see the laws of England trampled under the foot of prerogative." That is the keynote to the whole spirit of Defoe—rather be a bondsman by law than a freeman by favour; rather go to Newgate by law than to Court by the King's breath. That was the spirit that filled this dauntless man all his life. At that time, though the Dissenters were much persecuted, they were rising into importance, and in that and after reigns they were used as a foil to give liberty to the Roman Catholics. But some of them were sturdy enough

* The Test Act was passed in 1673, with the object of preventing political power being placed in the hands of Papists. The title of the Act is, "An Act for preventing dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants." Under the provisions of the Act, all persons holding any office or place of trust, civil or military, or admitted of the King's or Duke of York's household, were to receive the sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England, and to make and subscribe the following declaration: "I, A. B., do declare that I believe there is not any *transubstantiation* in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or in the elements of bread and wine, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever." The Dissenters entertained such fears of the Papists that they actively supported the passing of this Act, though it included them not less than Papists, by reason of the requisition of taking the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England.—*The Student's Hume.*

to refuse it, like Paul, who would not be released but by the law. Thus matters soon passed into the famous Protestant epidemic, of which the great quack and impostor was Titus Oates, who gave out new and marvellous stories day by day of what was to be done by the great ogres of Rome. Defoe tells of the sort of feeling which existed at that time, indicated by the popular belief in the story that six Popish Frenchmen stole the Monument, but were made to bring it back. You know that whether a story is believable or not doesn't matter, if it is only given to the public at the right time. If the story had been that six Frenchmen had *eaten* the Monument, it would have obtained equal credit. All this was going on, and it was the early field in which Defoe was trained.

By-and-bye he got to work. The first book he wrote was called "Speculum Crêpe-gownorum"—(a looking-glass for crape gowns). This title needs some explanation. Crape had been introduced by some refugees; the ladies made gowns and petticoats of the stuff, gentlemen had waistcoats of it, the clergy had crape gowns (for they had not been elevated to the dignity of silk). This was the peg Defoe took on which to hang his satire, which so well succeeded that it not only put down the affectations and fopperies of the young clergy, but drove crape out and nearly ruined the folks who made it. The pamphlet was written in reply to the famous Roger L'Estrange, who had been making fun out of the Dissenters. There was plenty of room for this fun, but, to the astonishment of L'Estrange and the world, there came a man from out their camp as good as he, who held up to the clergy a looking-glass showing their faults in a manner they did not like. He was almost the first man of the Dissenters who was able to laugh and make anyone else laugh.

Then came his history of the Hungaro-Austrian wars, which cannot now be entered into at length. Writing on that great war between Austria and the Turks, Dissenter and Protestant as he was, he went for the Pope. The Dissenters, very glad to see the Pope turned out anyhow, pitted the crescent against the cross. "Nay," said Defoe, "the Turk is worse than the Pope; I had rather the Popish house of Austria should ruin the Protestants in Hungaria than that the infidel house of Othoman should ruin both Protestant and Papist by overrunning Germany."

In this, although Defoe took the really logical course, he was certainly prudentially wrong.

Then came James the Second, and now we find Defoe girding on the veritable sword; for the next event in his life was his joining the Duke of Monmouth's expedition—a step he was led to take by his intense hatred to the Stuarts. He had three great hates in his life: he hated the Pope, he hated the Stuarts, and he hated the Devil. But he had three great loves also: he loved the Whigs, he loved King William with manly passion, and he loved Dissent. Monmouth, Charles the Second's son by one of his many mistresses,—admirable in person, noble in disposition, witty in mind,—hounded on by foes at home and persecuted when abroad, listening to hollow promises of aid, landed in England without troops, to conquer the land. For a little time he gained some small successes, but, as we know, the expedition miserably failed. Defoe, at the end of the fight at Sedgmoor, escaped, and came back to London, hating the Stuarts more than ever, and prepared to welcome King William more than before. How Monmouth, taken in a ditch, went bravely to the scaffold, you know; how he died you have read; how the bloody butcher Jeffreys, and other drivelling, drunken, unjust judges, backed by packed and corrupt juries, stained the annals of England by their unholy decisions, sending innocent men to death, to Virginia, and elsewhere, you have all heard. However, Defoe got back with a safe skin, remained quiet for a little, and then plunged into warfare again.

James—silly and stupid, gloomy, tyrannical, and cowardly—began to tickle the Dissenters by holding out the olive branch. This man was a bigot at heart, and never intended good to Dissent. The seeming olive branch was nettles. The best thing said of him was by a French wit, who, seeing him come from a Popish chapel, said, "There goes a nice honest gentleman that gave up a kingdom for a mass." You know James's end, and how William was brought in. Defoe loved William as a man, and was angry with the tittle-tattle that sprang up against him. Men called him a Dutchman, and thought *that* made up a multitude of sins. They wanted to have a Stuart without mischief in him,—a thing impossible, as everybody knows. They wanted to have James's pedigree and William's sense

But we are getting on too fast. In his private affairs we now find Defoe visiting Spain, not on political, but on business grounds. On his return he set up as a hose-factor in Freeman's Court, Cornhill. His friends called him a "hose-agent," his enemies called him a "stocking-seller." He was too mercurial and did not succeed well. He was never calculated for a tradesman. "A wit behind the counter no apron-strings can hold," as he expressed it, and he shortly became bankrupt. But he paid his creditors up to the uttermost farthing. There are bankrupts *and* bankrupts; and Defoe was the eccentric, the almost inconceivable bankrupt, almost extinct like the dodo, who pays his debts when he need not. He did not pay them at once, however. He went down to Bristol during the days of his darkness, and there, as the poor debtor was only allowed one day's grace a week, he acquired the name of the "Sunday Gentleman," from being seen on the Sabbath only. But his commercial prosperity became a little better. At length there came a gleam of sunshine, and he rose in political favour with King William, who made him accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duties. He held this appointment until the commission court was broken up, when the duties were repealed, and with them went the office. Next he set up a brick and tile works at Tilbury, where he employed one hundred labourers; he built himself a great brick house at Newington Green, and was at his highest point of commercial importance.

Tile-making, however, did not suit him much better than stocking work. His spirit could not be restrained. If there were any pamphlets to be written, or a shindy going on, away went his apron, and he was in the middle of the fray. He was a regular Ishmael—his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him. He was one of those uncomfortable men who never make a good partisan. He could see the speck on the church steeple, but could perceive likewise the dust on the table in the conventicle. He was plentiful of his satire, and did not spare any man. He wrote a pamphlet on "Occasional Conformity."* The occasion of it was this: There were men (mayors and alder-

* "Occasional Conformity," as it was called, was the compliance of Dissenters with the provisions of the Test Act, by receiving the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England, in order merely to qualify themselves for holding office or entering into corporations.

men) that were for going to church *sometimes*. Sir Humphrey Edwin, while he was Mayor of London, after attending church one Sunday forenoon, carried the insignia of his office to the conventicle at Pinner's Hall in the afternoon. Great was the outcry made by the Churchmen. One said that Sir Humphrey had been guilty of a horrid crime, inasmuch as he had dared to carry the insignia to the hated conventicle, but Defoe did not rush in to defend him. In his rough way, he denounced this "playing at bo-peep with the Almighty," as he called it. Not polite, but very forcible this. The idea of a horrid Dissenter going to church in pomp and state—it was not to be borne by Churchmen. Defoe thought so too, and put it down.

He next wrote his "Reformation of English Morals." Such a reformation was a giant's work. Hercules and his stable business was nothing to it, and Defoe was not a Hercules. He began by attacking the Stage; but the Stage lived longer than he, and its reformation did not ensue. He was bitter, especially, against the "Beggars's Opera." Archbishop Herring joined him bitterly, and I am inclined to agree with them, being unable to find a hero in a beastly Jack Sheppard or a brutal Dick Turpin.

Then came one of Defoe's great books. Now I have told you of folks calling William a Dutchman. They called themselves "true-born Englishmen," and Defoe thought that was arrant cant. The people were beginning to tire of their King William, and hankered after the Stuarts again. They said, "He's only a Dutchman, and we want a true-born Englishman." And "True-born Englishmanship" soon became the popular cry. Then Defoe was told that they were laughing at King William, and forthwith he took his pen, and sat down and wrote his "True-born Englishman," to show that, of all the mongrel breeds in the world, the English could claim first place for being the most mixed. And very clever it was. Thus he wrote

"The *Romans* first with Julius Cæsar came,
Including all the nations of that name,
Gauls, Greeks, and Lombards; and by computation,
Auxiliaries or slaves of every nation,
With Hengist, *Saxons*; *Danes* with Sweyno came
In search of plunder, not in search of fame.
Scots, Picts, and Irish from the Hibernian shore,
And conquering William brought the *Normans* o'er.

All these their barbarous offspring left behind,
 The dregs of armies, they, of all mankind,
 Blended with *Britons*, who before were here
 Of whom the *Welsh* ha' blest the character.
 From this amphibious ill-born mob began
 That vain, ill-natured thing an *Englishman*.
 These are the heroes who despise the Dutch,
 And rail at new come foreigners so much,
 Forgetting that themselves are all derived
 From the most scoundrel race that ever lived—
 A horrid crowd of rambling thieves and drones
 Who ransacked kingdoms and dispeopled towns.

The wonder which remains is at our pride
 To value that which all wise men deride.
 For Englishmen to boast of generation,
 Cancels their knowledge and lampoons the nation.
 A *true-born Englishman's* a contradiction,
 In speech an irony, in fact a fiction,
 A banter made to be a test of fools
 Which those that use it justly ridicules.
 A metaphor invented to express
 A *man a-kin* to all the universe."

He completely knocked the bottom out of the "true-born Englishman," and showed how nice a mixture we were—Picts and Scots, and aboriginal people, who dyed the last pattern into our skins; Saxons and Normans, Huguenot refugees and Vaudois exiles. 'This is the "true-born Englishman." "Stand up and let us look at you," he said, "there are not two alike; you must all have come out of the cave of Adullam." I am sorry to say Defoe was right. I think it better not to trouble ourselves over much about our origin. Here we are, and here, *D.V.*, we intend to stop. Well, King William heard very little more of being a Dutchman again. He knew the immense service Defoe had rendered him, sent for the wit, and took him into favour ever afterwards, making him his personal friend.

Well, King William went and Queen Anne came. We have looked at her before—small head, tender conscience, very scrupulous, very stupid; with always one woman to whom to gush—or rather two, one who was finishing and another who was coming in—a churchwoman one day, a popular election woman another. Sometimes she thought she should be on the throne,

and sometimes not ; sometimes she stood up, and sometimes sat down : very good ; very good for nothing ; a poor, well-meaning, feeble kind of woman ; didn't do any harm—I don't think it was in her ; I don't think she did any good, and I don't think she understood what it meant. She was a fine piece of back-ground, neutral tint ; a capital chance to scribble any pattern upon. And, as might be expected, out came the Jacobite to scribble his pattern, and the churchman to scribble his. At that time high churchmen were beginning to get rampant. Sacheverell was for putting down “these Dissenters” with a high hand, and preached, “He cannot be a ‘true-born Englishman’ who does not lift up the bloody flag and banner of defiance against Dissenters in the streets of London.” Queen Anne, afflicted at the idea of doing her miserable Stuart brother wrong, gave the party all the feeble aid she could. This worthy divine, Sacheverell, did lift up the bloody banner against Dissenters, and their meeting-houses were given to the flames. Defoe heard of it, and as King Alfred sought the Danish camp as a harper, so he sought the camp of the Churchman, and wrote his matchless pamphlet, “The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.” With irony all too keen he wrote as a Churchman. The church people were delightfully taken in. Parcel after parcel went down to Cambridge. It was bought up by church folks and parsons everywhere. Dear dull souls, they could not see the satire. The pamphlet advocated fire and sword against the Dissenters as the shortest way to get rid of them. The clergy were delighted with it, and one went so far as to say that “next to the sacred Bible and the holy Commentaries, this is the very best book I have ever read !” It was this consummate piece of irony that saved English Dissent. Defoe had gone into the Churchman's camp and “fooled them to the top of their bent ;” and great was the outcry on the discovery. How did the Dissenters take it ? A great many of them took it seriously ; nearly all of them had lingering suspicions. “Is it of the heavens, heavenly ; or is it of the devil, devilish ?”

By-and-bye the secret got out. Fancy the rage of the clergy, who had carried the book with them into their pulpits ! Fancy the rage of Cambridge, that they had been taken in by a low Dissenter ! Poor Defoe got between two fires. The dear dull Dissenters did not take the joke ; and, as is the case now, those

who didn't see it didn't like it, and those who did see it were worse, because they thought it was teaching the church people how to hurt them. Heavy deacons, and other folks of that kind, did not see what there was in such a thing as that. One Benson (how we should like to have his portrait!) was himself going to raise a prosecution against Defoe. He was saved the trouble. The House of Commons took the matter up, and ordered the book to be burned by the hangman. Defoe, seeing the storm coming, fled; but when the printer and publisher were arrested he pluckily came back to bear the brunt. He was not the man to shirk a responsibility. He never deserted a friend, and was never the base, beggarly, contemptible coward to try to get out of the mischief he had been the chief cause of making. He came out boldly, and was tried. "I wrote the book," he said; "there is no mistake about it." As the author he was sentenced to pay a fine of 200 marks, to stand three times in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and to find sureties for seven years. How this was brought about, by a corrupt court and a packed jury, we know. All these punishments were carried out. He went to the pillory, but the people did not pelt him. Instead of throwing mud and rotten eggs, they wreathed the pillory from top to bottom with garlands, and came out from public houses and drank his health from foaming flagons. It was his day of triumph. It was a rare day's fun in London. There, in the hot sun, they came round him with their beer. "Here's a health to you, Defoe," they cried; and not a grain of mud was flung at him by any man. But there was a *thing*—Alexander Pope—that did throw at him in his "Dunciad." The little crook-backed liar wrote:—

"Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe,
And Tutchin flagrant from the scourge below."

But Pope's mud stuck to his own fingers, and Defoe's character was untouched. Whatever noble amateurs may say of Pope, he was a mean, cowardly creature, a man with a crooked soul in a crooked body, all too mawkishly effeminate to sympathise with martyred principle.

Defoe wrote a hymn to the pillory when he came out; he set the pillory to music—a common metre, perhaps, but there it is.

What can you do with a man like that?—a man that would frame and glaze the instrument of torture, and hang up the whip that scourged him, in his best room. He went to Newgate; but though in prison, his brave heart was uninjured, and his pen was busy. There, in that vile place, among pirates, pick-pockets, and trulls, he made the best of circumstances, and gathered information from their lives and their wickednesses that served him as subjects for his pen afterwards.

The "Review" he brought out was the precursor of all Reviews, and was earlier than the *Spectator*, *Rambler*, and *Tatler*, though not a single complete copy can now be found. His reputation was great, and the booksellers served him very badly, and, in spite of his remonstrances, often put his name on the title-page of a bad book in order to sell it. Defoe himself wrote a preface to a most dull and stupid work on Death,* and entitled it "Mrs Veal's Ghost," † than which few things are more humorous.

By the intercession of a political enemy, Harley, he was at length released from Newgate, and retired first to Bury St. Edmunds, and then to Dorchester, for quietness; but he could not keep himself at rest, and a man that cannot be quiet at two such towns as these, cannot find quiet on this side of the grave. His enemies brought sham actions against him, persecuted him, opened his letters, got him into every kind of trouble.

Yet he got into some favour again, and through Harley's influence he was sent to Edinburgh, where he took part in some of the preparatory negotiations relative to the Union of England and Scotland. In connection with this mission he issued a large book, which contains most valuable information touching the Union.

He was now sixty years of age; he had had a touch of apoplexy, and his right hand began to fail him. With enemies and troubles many, we find this man of 210 books a kind of intellectual Ishmael, a man who would as soon attack Dissent for its vulgarity and cringing as the Church for its pride and tyranny.

But now came out the golden book, "Robinson Crusoe," the

* Drelincourt's.

† "A true relation of the Apparition of one MRS VEAL, the next day after her death, to one MRS BARGRAVE, at Canterbury, the 8th of September, 1705, which apparition recommends the perusal of Drelincourt's book of consolation against the fears of death."

boy's darling, the delight of the world ; the most consummate tale, perhaps, that was ever written. It came from the pen of a man empty in pocket, bankrupt, broken down, who had been in the pillory, and in Newgate twice. He sat down after all this, and wrote that sunshiny golden book, a book that all wise men should read twice, a book that has taken more boys into the British Navy than ever press-gangs have done. Critics want to show that it was founded on fact ; but who cares ? It owes nothing but to the admirable, witty way in which he makes fiction appear truth. What a curious problem it is which that book proposes ! What a singular proposition it sets itself to work out !—given a man born under the circumstances of civilisation suddenly put into conditions of barbarism, what will become of him ? As a work of art, its liveliness, its evenness, its simplicity, plainness, and minuteness of detail, need not to be dwelt upon. This extreme minuteness is remarkable in his other works too. More people have risen up from reading his "Robinson Crusoe," "Memoirs of a Cavalier," and "History of the Plague," believing they have read a veritable narrative, than from any other novels. He did not see the Plague of London, and was never a Cavalier, in spite of his most detailed relations. To characterise "Robinson Crusoe" would be as absurd as to characterise the "Pilgrim's Progress," which lives in every heart.

Many books followed his "Robinson Crusoe ;" some that rather shock us. These are gatherings from Newgate, and Newgate flowers are not all sweet. There's one thing, you need not read them. He wrote a host of novels, "Colonel Jack," "Captain Singleton," "Moll Flanders," and so on. They are all the adventures of pickpockets, and such like people, thieves, *et hoc genus omne* ; and are out of date now. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* has attempted to construct a complex theory on the subject of the man who condemned the "Beggars' Opera" penning these novels.

I think it arose from his associations in Newgate, from his forced companionship with Colonel Jacks and Lady Roxanas ; for he was far too good a judge of human nature to sit down and sulk in a corner, or to shout out amidst such a crew the nasal songs of Zion. Perhaps, too, he found this more profitable than writing some life of another Colonel Gardiner, destined to lie unbought on Tract Society shelves.

He retired at last to Stoke Newington, in the hope of closing

his troubled life peacefully ; but it was not to be. He had gathered together a little money for the sake of his family, and of this he made his son trustee. His son turned traitor, and made away with the money ; and this man's tough British heart, that had stood the attacks of clergy and political enemies unmoved, and had withstood the pillory and Newgate, this great heart broke before the cruel treachery of his son. Priests, kings, troubles many of body and mind, had failed to crush it ; it yielded now. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, the *Campo Santa* of English Dissenters, where Watts was first silent, and Bunyan ended his pilgrimage. His death occurred in 1731. But what happened to him after death ? His very name has been perverted to Dubow, most probably by the stupidity of the sexton, and, as such, it appears on the books. Says the register, "Buried, April 26, Mr Dubow." This is fame ! The man who has frightened kings and made priests tremble is "Mr Dubow." What a lively rebuke to all human greatness ! I know not, since Solomon wrote "all is vanity," aught so bitter and sad. The author of "Robinson Crusoe" "Mr Dubow" !

In his works, Defoe's capacity and knowledge are fully shown. He did other things than write novels. Many matters over which there are squabbles in this day as to the invention, were projected by him. The whole system of savings banks, the intellectual equality of women, the idea of idiot asylums, police supervision, street lighting, the education of females, free trade, the whole practice of so-called modern political economy, all these and other subjects were by him treated. He was a brave active man, who saw things as they were, and said what he thought ; a man battling for liberty all his life through ; who fought with a wrong-doer, whether friend or foe ; the Ishmael of political writing. But he did not get the full length of liberty itself. Like others, he stopped short ; there was a limit even to liberty. There is a pleasant and admirable passage in old Foxe—him of "The Martyrs"—which shows how he understood liberty thoroughly ! He asked that the King would be pleased not to burn the Anabaptists. He might do anything else to them he liked ; anything but burning would be toleration sufficient for Foxe. Listen to the delightful old twaddler :—"There are chains, there is exile, there are branding and stripes, and even the gibbet ; this alone, burning, I earnestly deprecate."

Defoe would not go that length. He would neither have the kicks, stripes, chains, gibbets, or branding of old Foxe; but he would stop short of Unitarianism: that was strong, open heresy. Proper Baptists, decent Independents, holy Presbyterians, were tolerable; beyond them he would stop. He did not see with Locke, that what is called toleration is a notable law of the human soul. It was left for Locke to do in philosophy what George Fox did in religion. Defoe did not see that; but he was like most of his compeers, and like a very large number of his successors. For all that, the man worked like the builders of the second temple: the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. His books have gone down—nearly all but one—but there was not one of them but went to deepen the foundations of the citadel of freedom for the people in Church and State. As a specimen of his popularity, it is worthy of mention that 80,000 copies of his “True-born Englishman” were sold in his life-time.

We have a portrait of his person, taken by the police, which, if not always flattering, and perhaps not quite what our wives would admire, is generally true. I have one or two of these portraits of myself, limned by police hands, which I treasure. When the House of Commons resolved to punish Defoe for his book, they issued the following proclamation:—

“Whereas, Daniel Defoe *alias* De Foe, is charged with writing a scandalous and seditious pamphlet, entitled ‘The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.’ He is a middle-sized spare man, about forty years old, of a dark complexion and dark brown coloured hair, but wears a wig; has a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes, and a large mole near the mouth. Whosoever shall discover and send Daniel Defoe to one of her Majesty’s principal Secretaries of State, or any of her Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, so as he may be apprehended, shall have a reward of £50, to be paid upon such discovery.”

Such, then, was the man, his character, and works. I have touched but slightly on them all, and must leave you to study at your leisure the life and doings of one of the worthy strange old souls of this land. Defoe deserves more regard from the courtly historians, who have given Mr Addison, Swift, and others, far higher praise than they could find it in their hearts to bestow upon this Dissenter, who stood in the pillory, and who learned much of his wisdom in the dark cells of Newgate.

DEAN SWIFT.

BORN 1667. DIED 1745. (FROM 7TH CHARLES II. TO 18TH GEORGE II.)

I DO not set Dean Swift before you as a model, nor as one you should love—*that* you will have some difficulty in doing. I do not pet him, I do not praise him. What we have to do is to study one of the most remarkable men this country ever produced; one of the strongest men, and one of the strangest mixtures of good and evil—the good far outweighing the evil—that can be found in literature. Some are prejudiced against Swift; but if they are inclined to condemn him because of his conduct towards women, let them just remember the other side. We should listen with a good deal of hesitancy to the condemnation of a man that two such women as Stella and Vanessa loved so thoroughly as they did. If he was such a wretch as many people suppose, why did *they* love him? People are angry with Swift because they cannot love him; but they should remember that he is not a model. In studying a man like Swift, we must do just what we would when we go into a museum, where there are animals the form of which we do not admire, talons which we dread, and sharpnesses from which we are glad to be saved. The question is not, whether we admire, but whether we cannot possibly understand. We have an eccentric, strong, violent man to speak of. Remember, too, that his life began in poverty and dependence, and ended in gloom and madness. We should be merciful to a life whose beginning was in wretchedness and dependence, and whose dark night sank into idiocy. For, if Swift sinned much, certainly he suffered much, and his retribution was as great as any of his crimes.

While residing as a clergyman in Ireland—the happiest time of his life—he was the leader of English politics, for he had more brains than any English politician. The little people who tried to use him had a contempt for him, and he returned it with interest; only in his case the contempt was well measured and he understood it, but in their case it was foolish and vulgar.

Swift was born on the 30th of November 1667, in Dublin; but though born in Ireland, he was of English descent, his father being a Yorkshireman and his mother a native of Leicestershire. It is idle to talk of Swift as an Irishman. He had not the graces of an Irishman. If he gave you a penny, he threw it at your head; but if an Irishman did not give you a penny, he would give you a cart-load of blessings; Swift would damn you while he blessed you. Swift, too, took care of his money; he was mean sometimes, and careful. And he hated a scene in the market-place; you wouldn't catch *him* gushing. Although he was a minister, he said his prayers on the sly; he was afraid that people should think him religious, or, rather, was afraid that people should see him at it. That was not very Irish. You don't catch an Irishman putting a bushel over his virtues. Not he! He would take a good tall candlestick, and place it so that the world might be the better for his example. Swift was English through and through. He didn't like smiling, he didn't like sentimentalism, he didn't like any show of feeling or emotion, except when it was necessary to gain an end. He would not write a book for the sake of writing a book. He would rather have swept a crossing than been a cadger of literature, scribbling books for sixpence. When he wrote a book, it was because he had an end to carry. Neither his virtues nor his vices were Irish. He was a patient, industrious, laborious, plain-speaking Englishman, hating sentimentalism, effusion, and finery of every kind. He was vindictive, violent, unforgetful, unforgiving. He did not want to be an Irishman; even the degree that he was Irish he considered a misfortune. (Fancy an Irishman considering it a misfortune to be Irish!) He was hampered by this misfortune, and it led to many evil results.

His father died before Swift was born. *There* was an evil beginning in life—for a poor mother to bear her ruined child when the father was gone! That was of itself a tragedy. It is an invocation to pity. It should win the mercy of the hardest. Swift's father was a poor man, and his funeral was provided by the society with which he was connected. Swift's nurse was a Whitehaven woman, and she loved the child; and wishing to return to her friends at Whitehaven, she ran away and took Swift with her; and when he got there, he was so delicate that his mother thought he had better stay, rather than run the risk of another sea voyage.

So he stayed among poor people in Whitehaven for three years. Here was another bad start. To do the old woman justice, however, she loved the child, and did her best for him. Before he was three years old she had taught him to read decently; and at five he could read the Bible.

He came back to Dublin delicate and miserably poor; what little he got was given him most ungraciously by his uncle Godwin, and Swift never forgave him. It is true his uncle hadn't much to give, but he had the reputation of being rich, and he suffered for his reputation, as men often do. His uncle's hard way with him sank into Swift's heart. When his uncle Godwin died, he fell upon his uncle William. His uncle William was not rich either, but he was generous, and he had a genial way of giving what he gave. And so all through his life Swift never forgave his uncle Godwin, and never blamed his uncle William. No man could bear the yoke of dependence so proudly as Swift, who was the proudest of men. All these hardships entered into the heart of Swift, and on every birthday he used to read the curse uttered by the man of old, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, 'There is a man child conceived.'" What a state a man must be in when he keeps his birthday in that fashion!

He went to school at Kilkenny, and there again somebody paid for him. Then, at fourteen, he went to Trinity College, Dublin, still a pensioner. He had a poor time of it there, and they set him the usual nonsense, namely, formal logic, and that miserable superstition, that depth of human imbecility, Greek and Latin verse-making. He was a most irregular student, however. There was that fascination of irregularity about him, that any book the authorities said he ought to read lost its charm, for there are some men who, the moment they see "With Authority" on a book, make up their minds that it is something dull. It is bad to stamp a book with the *permissu superiorum*. Swift read amazingly, but always discursively. In two years he had seventy-five penalties to pay; but at the end he got—or rather they gave him—the Bachelor's degree, "by special favour," which means that he didn't deserve it. He also got a degree at Oxford.

Afterwards, through the influence of his mother, Sir William Temple, to whom she was distantly related, found a place for him

in his residence at Moor Park, near Farnham, Surrey. He was not a regular chaplain, but a sort of dependant, and took his dinner with the upper servants. Can't you imagine, as Thackeray suggests, what the butler and the footman thought of this "Irish schollard"—this man with the ink and the ragged gown? King William was in the habit of coming to Moor Park to see Sir William, who was a great favourite, and on such occasions Swift would walk with the king in the garden. The king was so pleased with him that he offered him a troop of horse, thinking he offered him the highest of degrees, but Swift declined the offer. Great hopes crept into the mind of the dependant, and Swift thought the king might remember him in another way; but later in life he found new force in the passage, "Put not thy trust in princes."

About that time Swift wrote some verses meant for Pindaric odes; and Dryden, who was his kinsman, said, referring to them, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." Swift never forgave him, and Dryden caught it afterwards, as you may remember.

By degrees the bondage at Moor Park became irksome to Swift, and Sir William Temple grew cold. There was no great quarrel, but Swift became sick of his beggarly dependence. A place turned up under the Master of the Rolls, with £100 a year, which Sir William offered him. Swift refused it, and resolved to enter the Church, saying that his refusal of the situation would show that he did not enter the Church for mere love of pelf. But the bishops demanded a character, and asked him where he lived last? With Sir William Temple he said. Had he given him a certificate? No. Then he must get one. *There* was humble pie! This proud scholar had to ask Sir William Temple, whom he had left, for a character! It took him five months to make up his mind to it, and when he did write to Sir William there was an unnecessary degree of humility about his letter that makes one wish he hadn't written at all. He got his certificate, however, and the bishops gave him holy orders; and it was a pity they did. For what had Swift to do with holy orders? They were a fetter and a bondage to him. Swift was a man that trembled before God's majesty. Swift was a man that was full of love to man. Swift knew how to keep the two great commandments. But holy orders! Was he a man cut out for holy orders? Was he a man for *permissu superiorum*? Was he a man to fit on a white choker?

Was he a man to walk out upon the world, a retained defender of questions he hadn't examined? He was not made for holy orders, and they became to him a hindrance in life.

Swift's residence at Moor Park was an evil thing for him. He saw pretty nearly all the great people of England there; for the aristocracy used to come to Moor Park. He looked at them; and the long, lean, lank, poor scholar scorned them. He knew that he could wind them round his finger. He saw the big-wigs, and he looked underneath the surface of high life, and found little else but powder and hair and wig.

His journal to Stella contains many a touch of scorn about that Moor Park business:—"I have often thought," he says, "what a splutter Sir William Temple used to make about his being a Secretary of State." "I think I saw Jack Temple and his wife pass by me to-day in his coach. I took no notice of him; I am glad I have shaken off that family." Swift obtained a living at Kilroot, in the diocese of Connor, worth about £100 a year, which he afterwards handed over to a poor curate with a large family. It was a Protestant parish, and there were usually about twenty listeners.

Swift went back to Sir William Temple's as a friend, not as a servant, and dined with Sir William instead of with the butler. It was then that he became acquainted with that black-eyed lass that was to be a joy and trouble to him; but the story of his loves I must reserve till further on.

We now find him engaged in the pastime of hoisting an engineer with his own petard, in his controversy with John Partridge, the almanac-maker. Partridge did not die at the exact date anticipated,—that would have been too obliging of him,—but lived a little longer in the vain endeavour of proving that he was not what people took him to be—a ghost.

With the year 1710 came a change of Ministry, and it soon became apparent that the poor Irish clergyman carried the brains for both Parties. He had more brains than the whole of the leading men of both sides—Whig and Tory; and they had the singular grace of knowing it. The consequence was, Swift was now in his glory; for both sides were eager for him. The Whigs would have liked to have him if they could, and the Tories wanted him badly—for they always want brains badly—and were prepared

to bid high for him. Of course Swift has been visited with the wholesale indiscriminate condemnation which generally attends every man who is too independent to be a partisan, and sees too clearly the deep root in human nature of the opposite principles of Conservatism and Jacobinism, to be dragged like a tin kettle at the tail of any party. "In order to preserve our Constitution in Church and State," Swift said, "whoever has a true value for both will be sure to avoid the extremes of the Whigs for the sake of the former, and the extremes of the Tories for the sake of the latter;" and he avoided both extremes for the sake of both. The only man of importance who treated him with coldness was Godolphin, and Swift considered this a thing not to be forgotten or forgiven. His collection of rods was a very good one, and contained a choice selection; and it is pretty clear Godolphin did not like "Cid Hamet's" rod.

And now Swift formally and openly joined the Tories. The "first fruits" were remitted at once, so glad were the Tories to get him; and he promptly set about getting ready that vigorous, energetic, and unscrupulous brain of his to defend them through thick and thin. He was ready to knock statesmen over, punch the king, or crush anything that stood in his path. He could use every kind of weapon, and he attacked all, big and little, who came in his way. No creature was too small to bring down his vigorous and vehement strength; and he did this to such effect that it never troubled him again. If a flea bit him, he said, he crushed it. He was versatile, Protean, versed in all forms of composition: street songs, epigrams, lampoons, scandals, lies, veracities, truths, arguments, sophistry, logic, history (real or made)—whatever he wanted, he had it ready. Having worked hard for his own party, it was clear that he ought to have something; and Harley, with the supercilious stupidity of people with less brains than rank, who don't understand men who have brains and no rank, sent him £50. Isn't it amazing? No doubt Harley thought *that* something. But he had mistaken his man. Many men have their price; but £50 was not Swift's price. So Swift simply shut it up in the envelope and sent it back again; and he would have nothing more to do with Harley until that aristocratic snob apologised for the meanness of sending it.

And now it was wonderful what a friendship apparently sprung

up between Jonathan Swift and these big-wigs. They called him "Jonathan," sometimes it was "*dear* Jonathan;" they patted him on the back, and, what is rather sad to know, he seemed to like it, although there was a deal of savage independence about him. Perhaps he made rather too much fuss about independence. At all events, he liked to make people feel that brains were as good as anything else. He liked to stand upon his own ground, and that was the ground of conscious knowledge and power. As Dr Johnson said, with perfect justice, it must be allowed, Swift at one time dictated the political opinions of the English nation. Conscious of his power, he knew how to use it. These big-wigs called upon him. Well, he was "not at home;" "can't be seen now, call again." There was a club, numbering sixteen, called "The Brothers," and they elected Swift one of their number—in fact, he was at the head of the business. There is an admirable picture drawn of the time and of Swift, by Bishop Kennet. It describes Swift at Court, and the closing remark of Kennet is a fine Episcopal touch, for it mentions the Queen entering the room, beckoning to Swift, "and then," says Kennet, "both went off just before prayers." Here was Swift in his glory. He was dispensing patronage, and Swift loved to do good in his own time, and in his own way. He made a good and kind use of his private influence too,—promoting the success of Pope's Homer, and serving his friends how he could.

The existence of the Tory government depended entirely upon the making of peace with France. Dean Swift could make a war, or he could end a war. Nothing was easier with this wonderful man. Ask Dean Swift to make a war. "With pleasure." Ask him to turn it off. "Certainly." So he wrote a pamphlet on "The conduct of the allies." Everybody read it. The Whigs were enraged, but it succeeded, and the war stopped.

Was Swift disinterested all this time? Well, not exactly. He was too proud to ask for anything: he would rather rot in the gutter than ask any man for anything. But he was not too proud if he saw anything coming—if he saw the hand reached out to him—to meet it half-way. Why not make him a bishop? Perhaps he wanted spiritual qualification? Spiritual fiddlestick! What had that to do with it? They did not care for that in those days. Swift in the House of Lords to defend the Government

through thick and thin, to cover them with glory—for his tongue was as sharp and terrible as his pen—was what was aimed at, and the Ministry were willing to make him a bishop. It is true people said he was an infidel; but that was a slander. They referred to his “Tale of a Tub,” and called him a blasphemer; but that was a scandal. They did not want him to go in and defend the Church. No, no, the Church and State—especially the State. Harley would have made him an archbishop, if it could be done; but there was the Queen against him, and he had provoked the hostility of a royal favourite by a lampoon. Poor Queen Anne! she was the absurdest person the world has ever seen. She was a woman with a small brain and a tender conscience; and a conscientious fool is a difficult person to manage. Queen Anne had not read the “Tale of a Tub” herself (if she had she never would have understood it), but she had heard from Archbishop Sharp that Dean Swift was a questionable person; and she also was appealed to by one of her favourites—the lady whom Swift had lampooned—who opened against him woman’s potent artillery—tears. What can any man do when a woman takes to crying? You cannot curse her, however angry you may be. You don’t know what to do. So at last Swift left: it was plain there was no bishopric for him. So back he goes to Ireland in a sulk and a rage; and, taking his Deanery of St Patrick, quietly makes a face at it, when nobody is looking. The imperial intellect was thus thrust into that back parlour called Ireland. In his Deanery one gentleman had been—well, call it misbehaving. Coming into Church, he joined in the singing. The Dean was looking at him. In the anthem, unfortunately for the gentleman were the words, “Whither shall I flee from thy presence; whither, whither, whither shall I flee?” Swift, moderately, but loud enough to be heard, rejoined, “Go to gaol, you blackguard.” Next day, the man being duly penitent, things went on as usual, and he was forgiven. It was a strange change for Swift—to leave such homage, as no man of his rank had ever received before in this world, to go and live a miserable back-parlour life in Ireland; to go to a small Irish living, to settle disputes between drowsy pew-openers and ecclesiastical spider-brushers. He had no aristocratic relations—his wealth was in his head. He had made himself worshipped in England, and no sooner was he gone from London than mischief began. Oxford

and Bolingbroke quarrelled, and "dear Jonathan" must come back to make them friends. Their dissension threatened the very existence of the Tory party. Swift came, but failed to reconcile them. He published the "Public Spirit of the Whigs," a severe and bitter attack upon that party, containing also some abuse of the Scotch, whom he called "a poor, fierce, Northern people." They didn't like it, and it was droll to see the Scotch nobility going up to complain. There they went, actually before the throne, whimpering like school-boys, "Please your Majesty, that nausty great Irishman says we are not as clane as we ought to be." If it were not written in history, I would not have believed it. Swift didn't retract; he held the same opinion to the last. Oxford and Bolingbroke would not make it up, and Swift goes into Berkshire and visits with his friend Geary. Oxford is in disgrace; writes to Swift, and they go down into Herefordshire. The Queen dies; excunt the Tories. Bolingbroke, in disgrace, goes into exile. The change was great.

From 1714 to 1720, Swift lived a quiet life in Ireland, and perhaps these were some of the most pleasant years of his life. In 1720, his restless spirit heard a new call. Caring little for Ireland, loving the people but little, yet, seeing that they were down-trodden and oppressed, his soul was up in arms at once. He saw the Irish being put upon, and out he goes from the shade into the full blaze of day. The state of Ireland was then what it has always been—wretched and miserable. Ireland's history has been likened to an April day: gloom and sunshine. Yes, it is like an April day, only an April day all gloom and no sunshine. May be the sunshine is being reserved, so that by-and-bye they will get it all together. The poor Catholics were snubbed, they were like a toad under the Protestant harrow; the Protestants were divided into sects and parties, each party hating the others with an intense hatred only excelled, when they united, by the hatred they all showed to the said toad. Again, England, was trying to reduce Ireland to a beggarly province, instead of raising it to an integral part of a flourishing empire. The English Parliament was trying to arrogate to itself the right of making laws for Ireland—a right to which it had no claim. It was contrary to the principles of national righteousness. The policy of the English was to keep the Irish down—to put down Irish manufactures, to put down

everything Irish, except Irish poverty, oppression, and misery. What was to be done was to "keep these Irish *poor*; keep them *divided*." If you want to hit a man down, don't shoot him; draw upon him, sponge upon him, live upon him, fleece him, bleed him, borrow from him, steal from him, keep him low; and that was the policy that England was following with Ireland. Some of the legislative enactments passed to cripple or extinguish altogether branches of Irish industry in the reign of William III. were the causes of the fire of indignation which burned within Swift. By 10 and 11 William III. the exportation of Irish woollen cloth, except to England, was entirely forbidden. At a stroke, the Irish woollen manufacture went down. And what arose in its place? Smuggling wool to France. So that the sapient English destroyed a branch of Irish industry, to afford material to France—offering to the world a spectacle of stupidity equalled only by the accompanying dishonesty, selfishness, and rapacity. Swift saw this, and he wrote that most famous of political pamphlets, "A proposal for the universal use of Irish manufactures, utterly rejecting and renouncing everything wearable that comes from England." Oh! all Irishmen thought this excellent—the Papist, the Rapparee,* the Orangeman; all shapes and shades of this wonderful people were agreed. Off went the English coats, and on with the Irish frieze. Now was not that a plucky thing? This man stood up against the English nation. He was brought to trial, and after a hard struggle between the judge and the jury, Swift was left to the tender mercies of the former; but ultimately the victory rested with him. This done, the down-trodden people learned to look to this glorious Englishman as one of their noblest defenders, and one of the purest patriots old Ireland ever had.

In 1723, Swift had another fight. Copper money was very short. A Wolverhampton tinman, named William Wood, in a way which greatly displeased Swift, through the solicitation of the Duchess of Kendal, obtained permission of George I. to coin copper money to the amount of £100,000, in half-pence and farthings. Swift determined to pitch into Wood, and he wrote the "Drapier's Letters." † In writing as an ordinary Dublin draper there was a great advantage. Swift might be as vulgar, as

* A wild Irish plunderer, armed with a rapary or half-pike.

† Signed M. B. Drapier.

common-place, as back-parlourish as would hit the popular fancy. Well, he declared Wood's coppers were hardly worth buying. He wrote ballads about them, and at last nobody would have the coin at all. Tradesmen put out the sign, "Wood's ha'pence not taken here." In his "Drapier's Letters," Swift made a violent attack on Wood, poured out the vials of his wrath upon him, called him Woodlouse, transferred the Wood to his head, and every place where wood could be; called him wormwood, greenwood, logwood, hardwood, — put him under the pump, and pumped ridicule and invective upon him until he was soaked through. One of Swift's ballads runs thus, representing Wood as the singer:—

“ My dear Irish folks,
Come leave off your jokes,
And buy up my ha'pence so fine,
So fair, and so bright—
They will give you delight :
Observe how they glisten and shine !
They'll sell to my grief,
As cheap as neck beef,
For counters at cards to your wife ;
And every day
Your children may play
Span farthing, or toss on the knife.
When tradesmen have gold,
The thief will be bold,
By night and by day for to rob him :
My copper is such
No robber will touch,
And so you may daintily bob him.”

Why, this was an exceeding lie : the coins were good enough, but it answered Swift's purpose to say they were bad. A lie was an acceptable weapon to him. He knew it was a great mistake for those who wanted to gain their ends in times of excitement to be scrupulous. It ruined a partisan as a speaker. The true policy was to lie largely, cook statistics, alter them daily, say anything and all things. This was Swift's method ; he was before the partisans of the present day in discovering it. A nice conscience, accuracy of statement, the best statistics, carefulness about figures, preciseness as to details—these are not the things with which you

can expect to carry your case. Lie largely ; lay it on ; muddle figures, disregard statistics, sweep away questions about details, and success is certain. It may be that Swift descended to the vulgar. Yes ; but if you are to sing for the streets you must not go to Homer ; you must appeal to the people in words they understand. His street lampoons were coarse ; but they served their purpose, which, if they had not been coarse, they could not have done. To move a concert hall, Tennyson is not required—would fail altogether ; the man for that work is the author of “Not for Joe.” To declare that Wood’s copper money was brass, was about as brazen a lie as ever was uttered. But Swift, as usual, was victorious. The patent was withdrawn from Wood, and compensation granted.

The harsh policy of England towards Ireland still irritated Swift, and he wrote one of the most singular and strongest pieces of grim satire ever penned, entitled “A modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland from being a burden to the country, and making them beneficial to the public.” This was a scheme for utilising brats—a most desirable thing. “I have been assured,” says Swift, “by a very knowing American of my acquaintance, that a young, healthy, well-nursed baby, a year old, is a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled ; and I make no doubt it will equally serve as a fricassee or ragout.” “I grant this food will be somewhat dear,” he goes on, “but it will therefore be very proper for landlords. They who have already devoured the parents, have the best title to the children.” He recommended the eating of babies, especially to Protestants, because it would thin the ranks of the Papists ; for, as there were more Papists than Protestants, of course more Popish children would be devoured. The suggestion has a great many advantages. I don’t know whether it ever struck the Protestant party as it ought to have done ; indeed, I don’t know whether it may not at the present time commend itself to their notice as worthy of their consideration. It was the grimmest and bitterest thing ever penned. But what a state for a people to be reduced to : not to know what to do with their children ; for that was the case with Ireland then. Swift was again prosecuted, as he had been for the “Drapier’s Letters ;” but his friends gathered round him. The Quakers know how to contribute to a fray without actually sharing

in it, and it is said that one of them put the following text on the walls of Dublin: "And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid. As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. And the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not." So the grand jury ignored the bill, and there it ended. This popularity, however, was too noisy, and he retired to the country from it. Next we find him in London; then back to Ireland again, because poor Stella was ill.

At last came out, not only the most famous of his books, but, of its kind, the world's greatest book, "Gulliver's Travels." If I begin to talk of this book it will be all over with Swift. I will, therefore, pass it by—the book of books, containing all the greatness, and all the sadness and littleness of Swift. There is more of Swift in "Gulliver," than in all his other works. All that went before, and all that came after, are there. There are his humour and savagery, his generosity and satire, his cynicism and scorn for mankind.

Another visit to England, some more events, and then, as Scott says, "The stage darkness, before the curtain falls." Swift became an idiot, and lay for three years in that state. His infirmities and suffering increased, his glorious memory began to fail him; his fits, formerly restrainable, now became unrestrainable violence, and the great man lay down in idiocy. We have seen an ember die; it goes down in darkness, and then flickers up again, so, during the long three years in which this mighty man lay more helpless than a child, again and again appeared a little flicker—a little blue flame—to show that it was more obstruction than loss of power. The housekeeper tells him it is his birthday, and people are getting ready the bonfires. "It is all folly," he replied, "better let it alone." So for a moment there was fire again. The servant-man went to take away the watch one day. "No, no; bring it here." Another time he said, "I am what I am—I am a fool." The servant-man was breaking coal another day, whereupon Swift said, "Why, you blockhead, it is a stone." In 1745 his sufferings ended, and when he died there never was a man of whom it might be more devoutly and earnestly said in the words of the Liturgy,*

* The Order for the Burial of the Dead.

“We give Thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world.” The Irish idolised him, and, when he was gone: O how they wept for him! How they mourned for him! They lifted up their voices, and they wept, fulfilling to the letter the words of Shakespeare:—

“Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.”

In person, Swift was a comely man; tall, strong, well-made, with dark blue eyes, black and bushy eyebrows, and nose somewhat aquiline; a haughty dauntless man, who was never known to laugh, and seldom to smile. The description of Cassius exactly fits him:—

“He reads much.
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men.
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.”

He had a high opinion of himself and his powers. His pride was the most wonderful thing about him. He was as proud of the weight of his brain as other men are of the strength of their muscles, or the length of their pedigree. He had the clearest knowledge of his own wonderful powers, and looked upon himself with admiration. He was economical; at once a lover and a despiser of money. He knew, with Solomon, that “money is a defence;” he knew that every sixpence saved was a liberty gained, and that every pound put by was a palisade against fools. He understood that the minimising of wants was one way, and the maximising of resources was another way, of gaining wealth, so he was profuse, but never profligate, in his expenses. He left his money to a lunatic asylum. He knew the affliction was coming upon himself, and he did all he could to lessen the suffering of others. If you want to test his qualities, you may find them paradoxical, strong, proud, manly, hasty, kindly, merciful, savage, and severe, but full of generousness and justice—a man, I do not say possible to love, but a man very possible marvellously to admire.

With all Swift's greatness the majority of people are more interested in him because of the women who loved him than the books he wrote. Wasn't it wrong for women to love him at all—this proud, bitter, infidel kind of man? Women love strange people; and they loved Swift, and died for him. There must have been something lovely in him, or they could not have done so, although women certainly are great idol-makers. Women love blockheads and fools. It is a very common practice of theirs to take a block of wood—a blockhead—and with vermilion and gold do as the old idol-makers did. Women should not be interfered with in their idolatry; for if they ceased loving blocks and making idols, and took to loving only wise people, how many men would be without a choice! The world would not be quite so densely peopled as at present in any country. Therefore let idolatry and the idolators prosper. Ordinary women may be advantageously left to make idols of blockheads, but such women as loved Swift were not the sort to love blockheads. He was lovely, or he had not been loved by them. Their love was a passion; they died for him. It may be that when he was loved, those dark blue eyes of his could sometimes shine with a sweet lustre, and the great, strong, stern, sad man could be made gentle and playful. As Thackeray said, "The book of Swift's life opens at leaves kept by these blighted flowers"—Varina, Stella, Vanessa.

Jane Waryng [Varina] was a sister of a college chum of Swift's. He courted her for seven years, with varying degrees of temperance. He wrote to her at one time that "impatience is the most inseparable quality of a lover;" but he was not always impatient for her. He cooled, and she had to remind him—to ask his intentions, and whether he still loved her. It was very awkward for Swift. He sent, in reply, one of the shamefullest letters ever written by a man to a woman. He was perfectly ready to marry her, but he put it in such a way that a woman must have been past all respect who did anything but reject him with scorn. He did not inquire whether her person was beautiful or her fortune large; all he required was cleanliness in the former, and competence in the latter. In short he got out of the engagement without compromising himself legally.

Stella came next. She was Esther Johnson, a natural daughter,

I believe, of Sir William Temple. She saw heaven nowhere but in Jonathan Swift's blue eyes. At first Swift was her guardian, her brother, her friend. It was a happy and holy love that existed between them at first, and the growth of that innocent love continued until the removal of Stella to Ireland, when slander stepped in and suggested a love of another kind as possible. I have looked carefully into the loves of Swift and Esther up to this time, and can find no trace of sex in their love; it was pure, innocent, simple love. Stella's hand, however, was virtually refused to Tisdale, gossip was at work as usual, and the suggestion was made to Stella that she might be Dr Swift's wife. And why not? She loved him deeply; she was fair, and she had brains. Swift loved her; then why should they not be married? Farewell now to the simple confidence of other days. She blushes and flutters when he calls, and trembles at his footfall or the sound of his voice. He probably never intended to marry her; there was no touch of sex in his love for her. Then comes that fatal sign: she began to get jealous. She wanted to know about a lady he had mentioned; she finds his journal not quite so tender, not quite so long; and this love-sick woman weighed every word in his letters, seeking for some new light.

She had a brilliant rival in Vanessa (Esther Vanhomrigh), daughter of a wealthy Dutch merchant living in London, a proud, handsome, haughty woman. Swift thought if poor Stella heard of this it would pain her. He began to sneak; he began to conceal. When the conscience preached concealment it was time to change; so he will break through and go back to Ireland. Vanessa declares her passion; she stamps her little foot and declares he will not go. In return for her deep impassioned love he offers her friendship. For love like hers—for the love of this imperious woman—to offer her friendship! Swift left London; Vanessa pursued. He got her back.

Fancy, if you can, the position of this man. There was one woman left in London who must be after him or die; there was a woman in Ireland whom he must marry or *she* will die. Oh! if his sins were great, his sufferings were great. So he dallies with poor Stella, and will not marry her. At last he learns that Vanessa has found there is a little estate belonging to her near Dublin, and she must come to it. She was delighted to have an

excuse to be near Swift. He was in great perplexity about her following him into Stella's orbit. He went to see her occasionally—not often. She planted a laurel every time he visited her, and she dated her letters with the number of laurels. The question soon presented itself to Swift, "What is to be done?" Stella's reputation was going, and her health too: her life was ebbing away. At last he made up his mind to marry her. He married her because he loved her the less of the two; therefore the sacrifice was the greater, and the atonement the greatest. He married her; but what a marrying! At midnight, in a little house at the bottom of the garden. He would not let her take his name; they never lived in the same house; they were never alone together from the day they were married. Was that what she wanted? Was that what the great fond heart wanted?—to see her husband as others saw him, and to be bowed out with the last guest; to go to the dinner-party as a hired housekeeper; not to have his name—that proudest sign of woman's victory; not to look at him except slyly when he was not looking;—was that what that loving woman wanted? Strangest thing in human nature! The marriage was never owned. Why not? Why marry her at all? To save her life. Then why not acknowledge the marriage? Perhaps Swift's damnable pride had something to do with it, for she was illegitimate. He visited Vanessa, and she wrote to Stella to know whether she was really married or not. The reply was, "I am Mrs Swift." Swift saw the letter, and one of his dreadful paroxysms ensued. He saddled his horse; he rode like a fury, and as he only could ride. Stella saw his terrible face as he entered, and as he, striding forward, laid down her letter before her, and, without a word, left her again. He played with fire, and here was the result. Esther Johnson sank.

Swift's madness now hastened apace. If this man sinned, surely he suffered. These are theories, however, which I will not now go into. There stands the moral: Don't play with fire. He knew he had killed one woman already; he knew the other victim was fast approaching her grave. Such is the strange story: I leave it to you to work it out for yourselves. I cannot believe that Swift deserved the extremely severe sentence passed upon him. I do not believe he ever loved Stella with the love a man has for the woman he would marry, and there is only a trace of this

with regard to Vanessa. Perhaps his terror of the homely underside of human life may have influenced him ; his disease, a fatal malady, hung upon him from his youth, and he may have trembled at the notion of linking a woman's fate with that of a man who already showed signs of lunacy. His motives were no doubt mixed, but we are not here to judge him. There was, however, misery enough to have made him mad. So ended that strange life. " It hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world." And such a wreck ! lying there three years in idiocy. " Vanity of vanities ! all is vanity, saith the Preacher."

DR SAMUEL JOHNSON.

BORN 1709. DIED 1784. (FROM 7TH ANNE TO 24TH GEORGE III.)

IT seems almost necessary to apologise to you for bringing before you so old a subject, but if I can freshen up in your minds the memory of one of England's greatest men, I shall be well satisfied. The life of Samuel Johnson divides itself into two parts—one, the climb to fame, ease, and honour; and the other, the expanding in fame, ease, and honour. I propose to dwell first on the period of his life during which Dr Johnson was engaged in a long stiff struggle with the difficulties of life. The doctor met with almost every obstruction, and suffered from almost every evil; but he overcame them, and became the most respected, the greatest, and the most famous man of his country.

I will begin by looking a little at Johnson's ancestry. Look at Michael Johnson, a native of Shropshire, of obscure origin, who settled in Lichfield, where he became a bookseller, and where the people made him a magistrate—a man of strong and active temper, melancholy temperament, very poor and in debt always, a fair scholar but a poor man of business, a high churchman, and a royalist and loyalist of the most approved pattern, who believed in the Stuarts and much other old-world nonsense. One thing good about Michael Johnson was that a woman fell in love with him without being asked. That is enough at any time to cover a multitude of sins. She followed him to Lichfield, and lived opposite to him that she might see him go in and out, and he, when he found this out, went across the way and offered her his hand, but it was too late—her heart was broken, and all he was permitted to do was to see her buried in the old cathedral at Lichfield, and to put up a monument to her memory. Samuel Johnson's mother was a Worcestershire woman, possessing a good understanding, which had never been cultivated, and this fact, and the differences between Michael Johnson and his wife, was the

cause of much unhappiness between them. It was into this dreary, common-place kind of home, produced by these two uncongenial spirits and poverty, that Samuel Johnson came, and he came bearing a rare burden of evils: he had king's evil, he was purblind, he inherited the germs of many diseases, and was of a most melancholy temperament.

He was taken to London to be touched by Queen Anne for the evil, but it had no effect upon the lad, except that he carried through life the remembrance of a most gracious lady, and of some little toys which his mother bought for him on the way. There were some other circumstances connected with his boyhood's years which had a great effect upon him. One of these was his being carried into the cathedral at Lichfield to hear the ecclesiastical mountebank, Dr Sacheverell. In his school-days, he, being a cripple, was unable to walk to school. Boys carried him there on their backs, and he, being of the greater understanding, rewarded them by doing their school-exercises for them. Even at that early age he was distinguished for the superiority of his mental capacity.

Dr Johnson's studies were not profound in any one branch. He was prevented by disease from pursuing one subject long; but his learning was very various, and he was ready to bring it to bear upon every subject. After his school days he spent two years of sauntering, loitering, desultory reading; but yet those years were usefully spent. In 1728, when he went to Pembroke College, Oxford, he was afflicted with hypochondria, irritation, fretfulness, gloom, and despair. He was not a very regular student. He was very poor and very proud. Some good Samaritan, seeing his toes out, left a pair of shoes in his room; but the Doctor sent them out at the window. In after life he would not have done it. He would have swallowed his pride to have his toes in. He got into debt, and was compelled to leave Oxford without taking a degree.

To obtain a living, he went as usher to a school at Market Bosworth, and finding that insufferably dull, he left, and came to this excellent town of Birmingham. And this town was doubtless grateful for the honour of the great man's visit. This town must be always grateful to any great man who will put his foot in it; for its history is such a long eastern plain of well-to-do-ness, unbroken and diversified by genius—it is so difficult to hunt up the name of any great man who was ever born in it—that one is grateful

to Johnson for treading its streets. There are not many classical places in this town, but there is one in the Old Square, in which Johnson ate, laughed, and slept. Here Johnson had to do a little writing for a Mr Warren, who was the only bookseller in Birmingham then; and it is said that he was only half a bookseller after all. In Birmingham Johnson met with Mr Hector, who was his lifelong friend. There was little to be picked up by the Doctor in Birmingham, and therefore in 1734 he went to Lichfield. He sent out proposals for publishing the Latin poems of Politian: but nobody wanted them. He went to London, and applied to Mr Cave (Sylvanus Urban), the manager of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, who lived at that classical spot, St John's Gate, in Clerkenwell. Cave could do nothing for him, and he returned to Birmingham.

At this time Johnson was long, lean, gawky, gaunt, scrofulous, diseased, purblind, and out at elbows and toes, but not out of courage—the only thing he was permanently in. He must have been one of the oddest scholars the world ever saw. Never did a mortal genius clothe itself in so ragged and contemptible a covering. He was now thrown into the company of Mrs Porter. She was a widow; she is said to have been fat; I believe she was fair, and she was considerably beyond forty. She was planned upon a liberal scale. Wicked people said she had a weakness for cordials; but this probably amounted to nothing more than a liking for what would simply make her feel comfortable in the evening. Johnson, the ragged and the lean, met Mrs Porter, the gracious, the bountiful, and the liberally planned. Mrs Porter took only one evening to find out what England could not see for many years—Johnson's character; for she said to her daughter, when Johnson had left, "That is the most sensible man I ever saw." She found out, after a few hours' conversation with him, what a splendid heart and genius were concealed beneath a miserable covering. The consequence of this was a love-marriage on both sides, although Johnson was only seven-and-twenty and she was forty-eight. It must have been a funny sight to the clergyman, such an odd couple walking up the nave—she so fat, and he so lean—he so like the spire of the church, and she so like the little squat body thereof.

The consequence of this marriage was the necessity for further work, and Johnson retired again to Lichfield, and started a school,

but he only had three pupils, amongst whom were Garrick and his brother. Johnson's affection was so grotesquely and oddly shown, that the three little rips, his pupils, had no pleasure in their early years equal to watching the schoolmaster making love to his wife. The school failed, and Johnson again went to London. When he and Garrick were both famous, they used to chaff each other about who went to London with two shillings, and who had two-and-sixpence. In London, Johnson suffered a great deal from poverty, and made use of many little artifices to eke out his scanty means, and all the great kindly acts which his large manly heart prompted him to do cost him much self-denial. When he said that a man could live very well in a garret for one-and-sixpence a-week, the statement was not a speculative but an experimental one. Living in a garret, if anybody asked him where his residence was, it was very easy to reply, "I am to be seen at such-and-such a place." He found out that one might enjoy a great deal of good company in a coffee-house, by expending three-pence. Johnson afterwards learned to dine for eightpence: he got a cut of meat for sixpence, and a piece of bread for a penny, and he gave the waiter a penny. Johnson was fond of moralising, and said, "Always give the waiter a penny." It is always wise to do so. Another of Johnson's maxims was, "All visits should be paid on clean-shirt days."

In London Johnson did all kinds of literary work—translations, epitaphs, plays, poems, parliamentary debates, and everything else. He was first engaged with Cave, to report the parliamentary debates for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which Johnson took particular care "that those Whig rascals should not have the better of the argument." In 1738, he began to lift his head a very little above the level of mankind, and London, after several years, began to get a glimpse of what Mrs Porter found out in a night. In this year he wrote his poem "London," and got ten guineas for it. Pope read it, and foretold that Johnson would obtain a position in the literary world. It was after this that Johnson made the acquaintance of Savage. People wonder how it was that Johnson liked Savage. They imagine that Johnson was entirely composed of wisdom, and that he was nothing but a dictionary of aphorisms. He was no such thing. He was a great hungry man, with hot blood, strong passions, odd ways, queer

likings and dislikes, and mountainous prejudices, and he liked Savage because Savage had what he himself had not, and could not get—the incommunicable thing, gentlemanliness—a quality which it is said it takes three generations to make; and this was so very strange to poor Johnson! Once Savage and Johnson walked around a square all night, not having any money to pay for a lodging. “We were in high spirits, and brimful of patriotism,” said Johnson; “we inveighed against the ministry, and resolved to stand by our country.” Two ragged scholars, without sixpence to pay for a bed—why, the very plushed things in the square would have scorned them. And they resolved to stand by their country! When other nations were going to ruin, Johnson placed his great old Tory hand upon England, and although it rocked a little even in his grasp, he saved it, and the ragged scholar’s vow was fulfilled.

In 1747, the prospectus of prospectuses was issued—the prospectus of the Dictionary of the English language—when the diseased, purblind man was lifting his head slightly above the obscurity which had surrounded him, and was emerging into the sunlight of fame. That great dictionary was completed in three years. For his dictionary Johnson received £1500, a miserable compensation for the labour and expense. It was always a favourite subject of contemplation and conversation with Johnson—the number of Frenchmen it took to make the Dictionary of the Academy. “Forty Frenchmen for forty years,” he would say; “one Englishman for three years; forty by forty is 1600, therefore, as 3 is to 1600, so is a Frenchman to an Englishman.” He regarded the French as having been made of the stuff that was left after making the English. In 1749, he produced his “Vanity of Human Wishes,” for which he got fifteen guineas; and about the same time he brought out his tragedy of “Irene,” which was, by the acting of Garrick, prevented from being damned on its first representation, and which, by running nine nights, put £100 into Johnson’s pocket. He went to see it played, too, in a most elaborate get-up—scarlet waistcoat, with gold lace, and in a cocked hat, with gold lace also. Johnson was a man of sense, and he said, “You can speak to people better when you are well dressed.” And he was right. When you are ill dressed you look shabby; when you look shabby you are apt to feel shabby, and will act

shabbily. But Johnson grew fond of visiting the theatres—tell it not in Gath, nor publish it in pious Ascalon—and he went behind the scenes, and continued to do so until he, not being made of adamant, found that it would not do, and he told Garrick that he would not come any more, and he didn't. Johnson's next work was "The Rambler."

From this time things went pretty smoothly, until 1752, when his wife died. This went sheer to his heart, for he loved her dearly, and he (for which I will not blame him) prayed for her, but conditionally—he hoped it was not wrong, and if it was not wrong he would pray for her. When he was rich enough, he raised a monument to her. After this time, Johnson was great in London, but greatest at his club—not a club like those of the present day, a sort of immense joint-stock public house—but a place where the most genial spirits of the day met for social mirth and conversation; for Johnson was great in conversation, fond of argument and disputation, and if you would not contradict him he would contradict you.

When Johnson was preparing his dictionary, he wished very much for the patronage of Chesterfield, but that nobleman neglected him until the work was published, and then he sought, by recommending the book, to gain the credit of patronising Johnson. It was an instance of the truth of the words of the Psalmist, "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." This I have always found to be true. But Johnson wrote to Chesterfield a letter, informing him that his patronage had been withheld till it was not wanted. That letter was an immense stone, to which Johnson put his great Titanic shoulders, and rolled it against dedications, patrons, and patronage, and demolished them by one giant blow. That letter of Johnson's is medicinal. It should be taken when there is too great a tendency to bow down and worship the great ones of the earth; when there is danger of thinking that some great man, merely by virtue of being great externally, is wise, and when there is an inclination to flatter him accordingly. The letter is an invaluable prescription for people who are under the delusion that literature cannot survive without peers, that science borrows lustre from the mere names of nobles, that a meeting cannot be held for the discussion of social science unless there is an extensive exhibition of live lords. It is

a remedy for people who are in danger of running about to such persons, touching their hats to them, and saying, "Would you condescend to be scientific?" or, "Would you be so very good as to shed the light of your admirable countenance upon Literature?" It is a cure for all snobbery and undue worship of big people; and, since it was written, no man who has a book to write that the public wants, goes hat in hand to Lord Chesterfield or to Lord Anybody else.

There are few things in the world which are so well worth studying as the conquest which man makes in particular circumstances; and upon that account I have spent a good deal of time in showing how Dr Johnson struggled with more obstructions, more diseases, more poverty, and more hindrances than any other man in literary history. We now find him in comparatively easy circumstances, occasioned by one of the wisest pensions ever bestowed. Rewarded, all too late, with one of those righteously merited pensions given by governments in those lucid intervals when they deviate into sense; great in the possession of well-won fame in his own right; and patted on the back and patronised by the great in wealth and small in sense, Johnson found himself all at once the one man in England at whose feet the greatest in sense and intellect were not ashamed to sit, and the one man in England who, finding them there, was able and willing to rule over the most royal of them—the greater they were, the more he liked to fight them. The only man that ever may be said to have drawn a battle with Johnson was the great Burke himself. Though thus placed, however, no change came over him; he was Samuel Johnson—simple, learned Samuel Johnson—still.

As for his works, are there not his "Shakespeare" and his "Lives of the Poets"? And whatever there may be to say against the former, this cannot be denied, that Johnson was one of the earliest to see that Shakespeare, in disposing of those precious "unities," and laying down a rule of his own, was as great and wise as all who, having not the brains to lay down rules of their own, blindly follow those laid down for them in grand old Greece. Truly his notes to Shakespeare are not worth much, for his imagination was not great; but that preface,—it is one of the greatest, wisest pages that has ever been written about the greatest, wisest man that ever dawned upon this world. But we must not

idolise Johnson, or any one else. We must acknowledge that some of his notes to Shakespeare are indeed very trifling; that in them there are attempts at elucidation where there is no darkness; there are offers to guide where there is no necessity to guide; there are efforts to give a clue where there is no labyrinth; and there are pompous flourishes when nothing is needed to be used at all. Whoever neglects to read the preface neglects what is valuable; whoever wastes his time in reading anything beside will get nothing for his pains. And then Johnson's "Lives of the Poets"—it cannot be expected that any human being, how gifted soever he may be, can bring a score of geniuses to the bar of criticism and judge them all truly without one dash of favouritism, one dash of prejudice, one spark of partiality for one, that would not, unintentionally, injure another. Yet this man—a man of gigantic prejudices and strong dislikes, who, if he did not like a man, found it difficult to do him justice—took the very work in hand, and did it as no other man could have done. That which he said about Milton, though severe, was, in my opinion, a victory for him. It has been urged against him that his prejudices led him into doing an injustice to Milton; but at least this may be said of him, that he was the first to bring Milton from ill-merited obscurity, and demand for him well-merited admiration. That he did not like Milton we may be sure; but that, struggling against that dislike, he should have done Milton so much justice as he has done him, is a thing marvellously to his credit.

But leaving his books to hurry on with his life, one must of necessity fall back upon Boswell—that toad-eater, snob, booby, fool—whose only wisdom consisted in the ability to know a great man when he saw him, and whose only glory it was that he had the wit to encollar and enchain himself, writing upon his collar, "Samuel Johnson, his dog," and handing the chain to Johnson with the humble petition, "Please own me." Such a man it is simply impossible to place before you even as a subordinate character, and therefore he must be allowed to go—merely to speak without being introduced. The stories told of Johnson and Boswell are almost unbelievable, if not unwarrantable.

One of Johnson's most wonderful successes and delights was his visit to Scotland, where he went with Boswell. This visit was, I believe, productive of a great deal of good, though the Scotch

would not admit it. But the people of Scotland are a people who have marched into all countries, and have taken possession ; and where they go they stop. People must put up with a little egotism from them, and a determination never to be at a loss for a trumpeter. Now, what is the greatest kindness you could do such a people and such a nation? Rasp them down a little. Johnson knew that, and he did it—but wisely. He gave them some hints, and they did not like them, though beyond doubt some of them were adopted. I still believe that thousands of trees were planted because of Johnson's visit to Scotland. But Johnson did not only hint a want of trees ; he also insinuated a want of soap ; and when he returned to England he humorously alluded to the scarcity of that article, and afterwards, it is believed, Scotland became cleaner and better. "The finest prospect in Scotland," he said, "was the road to the south ;" and when asked by one to admit that at least Scotchmen were good gardeners, "Of course you are," he said "what could you do without gardening? You haven't any farms, and couldn't farm them if you had." "We were the first to do away with fees to servants," said another, "you must admit that." "Of course you were," he said, "you could not pay them." But one of the finest things he ever said—one of the finest lines of poetry he ever wrote—was that concerning his journey to Scotland: "Making a journey from England to Scotland," he wrote, "is like seeing a flower die down to a stalk."

I admit that Johnson had prejudices, and whilst he was a man of gigantic powers, he was a man of trifles—one whom nothing pleased better than to tease poor Boswell about Scotland. Though they are to this day time-honoured jokes, we like them because they are lively and ever entertaining. And then from Scotland Johnson went down to Boswell's seat, and Mrs Boswell didn't like him. How could she? No doubt he did splash the water about awfully when he washed, and spill his tea, and all that, and no doubt these habits rendered him a very obnoxious person in the eyes of the lady. But how thoughtful he was about it afterwards, and how at the end of all his letters he "hoped that Mrs Boswell was more placable !"

Johnson returned to London, out of which, it may be truly said, he was never supremely happy. He was not a great man out in

the country ; he could not have been if he had tried. Next to London, Oxford was his favourite place ; and when he got there amongst his old associations and the dust of libraries he was happy. He went down there now and again for a time. He expanded as soon as he got there ; he blew off steam ; he sat himself down and read, and afterwards returned to London, well laden with literature. But my object is not to follow Johnson through all the places and things which he admired.

By-and-bye Dr Johnson came to that dying which he dreaded. He feared it always ; he never pretended that he did not do so. He did not fear death, but he feared dying ; not the mysterious destination after death, but the act of setting out for it. And, yet, when the time came, he laid him down in faith, and was put to rest amongst the great of his native land.

Coming on, then, to a consideration of Johnson's character, it may be characterised as a strange compound of greatnesses and littlenesses, of wisdom and folly. He was a man who had weakness of body, who was melancholy in temper, who had an overclouding of soul ; a man who was nevertheless respected, a man of greatness, a man whose name was revered, a man with whom it was considered a reputation to have been associated. A man wept over by all who knew him ; a man who was often regarded as a great, coarse, immovable bear. But one who knew him well, said he had nothing of the bear about him but his skin, and he spoke truly. Johnson had the tenderest heart and the strongest temper ; the bitterest sarcasm and the gentlest spirit of consideration ; the profoundest learning and the most foolish of superstitions ; the most utter hatred of sin and the most tender mercy towards sinners. He was a wonderful and strange sage, a man of sharp temper, bitter tongue, and strict conscience ; a man ready to forgive and quick to lament offences. There was, too, a deal of ponderous fun about him, and he put it into one of the oddest of places—his dictionary. “Lexicographer,” it runs, “a writer of dictionaries—a harmless drudge.” Cobbett never was capable of a finer touch than that, although, in illustrating nouns of number in his Grammar, he wrote, “House of Commons ; den of thieves.”

But what I chiefly like him for, excepting his tender-heartedness and his unusual kindness, is his robust nature, which won him the esteem of all who had the pleasure of his acquaint-

ance. His good sense was wonderful; he examined any case presented to his notice on its merits, and he exhibited some of the most estimable discretion and gave some of the most admirable decisions ever known. Conversation, too, was his delight: he was greater in conversation than he was in his works. He hated all that miserable, effeminate nonsense uttered or expressed in conversation, such as, "We don't like politics and religion; let us talk of something else, that we all agree about." What a lively evening conversation of that kind must make! How entertaining it must be! Dr Johnson was a man who, by his conversation, put an end to many a club, dissolved many a society. He was a man who liked a good stand-up fight. If one person in company said it was blowing an east wind, he said it was blowing a west wind, merely in order to get some person's wind up. That was one trait of Dr Johnson's character. He was a man of irascible temper, and was a terrible enemy to all bores. Whenever Johnson met a man stuffed, he took him up at once, like a child takes up its doll, and shook the bran out of him. There were no half measures about it; he did it once and for all, thoroughly. How he did punish that little Mrs Thrale, the brewer's wife, to be sure! And then his sarcasms in conversation were abominable sometimes. "Doctor, what do you think of marriage?" said an empty-headed fellow to him one day. Rather a wide question truly! No doubt the querist saw it, for he narrowed it immediately. "Do you think I ought to marry, I mean?" he explained. The Doctor's blood was up at once. "Sir," he said in his bitterest tones, "nobody ought to marry where there is no chance of propagating brains." It was a harsh sentence, and he felt it. The moment he had said it his conscience began to work, but he did not apologise in words; he never bowed in his life, except to an Archbishop, and then he bowed, not only all over, but all over the room. No, he did not apologise in words; but he left the room, to return after a space, turn the conversation, and bring from the depths of his memory and fancy such a wealth of charms as must have made the young man feel glad that he had been knocked down, for the sake of being picked up again by so kindly a hand. Another day, an empty-headed man, who had pestered him much, ventured to agree with him. "If I have said anything, sir, that you can

understand," said the Doctor, "I beg to apologise to the rest of the company."

But though thus severe to bores, his kindness and humanity of heart in little things was wonderful, for he was merciful even to his cat. Who but Johnson would have gone out to buy oysters for his cat "Hodge," lest the servants should treat her unkindly, on the suspicion that she caused them trouble? And what other piece of Christian charity can compare with that good work of the Samaritan on the Jericho route, but that act of Johnson's, when, finding a poor woman, fallen, cast out, diseased, upon the pavement, he took her upon his back, took care of her for a long time, and with all tenderness endeavoured to put her into a virtuous way of living? And then, Robert Levett, and the negro servant! And above all, that affectionate farewell of the old servant of his father's, Catherine Chambers—the greatest man in England praying with, weeping over, kissing, taking a tearful farewell of the poor old domestic on her death-bed! Nothing in history is more touching than this man's tenderness. His conscience, too, was tender, for did he not stand bareheaded for an hour in Uttoxeter market-place, doing penance for refusing to mind his father's bookstall there fifty years before? When he had obtained a house, that house was the resort of many poor, intellectual persons, in whose company he gloried.

But one of Johnson's greatest qualities was his opinions. Of course it was the fashion to snub Johnson a few years ago, because he was a Tory. Johnson was a grand Conservative; nature and inclination made him so. He was born a worshipper of Governments; he looked up to Cæsar from his childhood; he had a strong passion for kings. This is the common instinct of man; it was the deliberate judgment of Johnson. But you must remember that he was not a blind Tory; he was a Constitutionalist. He gloried in his own and all other countries being well governed and well conducted. He had a deep instinctive loyalty, mixed withal with a strong, ineffaceable love of liberty—not the liberty of lawlessness, but the liberty limited by order and good government. He was a man free from servility, manly, upright, an immense lover of kings and authorities, fond of ceremonialism and forms. And I would here like to impress upon you that Conservatism is a principle as necessary to social life as is its opposite. To talk

of Conservatism being “silly” is the same as to get up a spirit against galvanism, to draw no distinction between cold and hot water, to assist in putting down the North Pole, or to prevent water from freezing. We cannot go on without Conservatism; the world would come to a standstill without it. And Johnson leaned strongly to Conservatism—perhaps too strongly; but it was ever visible in all his actions that he disliked despotism.

He was full of gentle kindness and humanity, sweet-heartedness, good sense, bountifulness, and hatred of what was mean and contemptible; a man on whom some few weaknesses sat, like patches on the fair cheeks of the beauties of his day, to call attention merely to his many greatneses. His counting of posts, his care to put his right leg foremost on the threshold, his prejudices, and his rudenesses must all be overlooked, when one but merely glances at the struggles, the greatness, and the goodness of the man.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

BORN 1728. DIED 1774. (FROM 2ND GEO. II. TO 14TH GEO. III.)

IF I were allowed to choose a professorship, I should like to be appointed Professor of Human Nature, not, perhaps, so much because this is the study I best understand, as the study I best love.

To-night I have to deal with one of the most remarkable specimens of human nature which it ever perhaps has been my lot, not to dissect, I hope, nor to despise, but rather to set before you, in all his own flesh and blood foolishnesses, weaknesses, and noblenesses, which makes him at one and the same time one of the weakest and most loveable of mankind.

Other gentlemen have set before you the curiosities of the animal kingdom. They are very wonderful, my interest in them is intense, and my ignorance of them prodigious. I like to hear all about the bones and stones of the world, of boulders and aboriginal apes; but my faculty, if I have one, is simply to study the strange human beings who have passed before my gaze. You will be pleased, therefore, to consider that our particular study now is the curiosities of human nature.

To-night I have to introduce a most eccentric and a most loveable man. I cannot praise him. I must withhold from him my moral esteem and admiration, but I am afraid we shall have to find that Goldsmith had all those graces which, like beauty of the body, ask no logic and need no introduction, which win their way at all times and in all places, until at last, though our better reason may revolt against it, we must look upon him much as we do upon a pretty woman—she is never out of season and never out of place, always welcome, let her come whenever she will, and never distasteful, but when she turns her back to go. The Shandyan theory, of which I am so fond as to the way in which names influence natures, breaks down sadly in this instance. The name Goldsmith seems to imply ease and comfort, and plenty, and freedom

from care ; but what meaning has it when applied to a man who throughout his life had but the remotest connection with gold? If the Goldsmiths had anything to do with gold, it must have been the smith's part, to make it for other people, and never to touch it themselves. Oliver Goldsmith never had gold, nor had his family. Their hearts were in the "right place," their brains anywhere ; in them prudence and common-sense seem to have been sadly dislocated.

Oliver Goldsmith was one of that remarkable class for which Ireland has become so famous—absentees. I don't know how it is that this glorious country has never been able to keep her children, and I will not speculate lest there should be any Irishmen present. Jonathan Swift was an Englishman banished and exiled to Ireland ; *this* man was an Irishman who banished himself to England, and never went back to Ireland. I am not going to apologise for him or to praise him,—it is too often the custom of lecturers to seek to do either the one or the other,—but I am going to take the creature as he presents himself, and to understand him as far as I can. I have no great praise to bestow on Goldsmith, but I have to show that, whilst I am prepared to condemn him by my moral sense, and whilst obliged to say that he was not at all respectable, yet he had those graceful graciousnesses and gracious gracelessnesses which, in spite of a sense of condemnation, made him after all one of the darlings of the human race.

Goldsmith's family had always been distinguished for being worthy people, in the best sense, but not in the worldly sense. Oliver was the son of a clergyman, the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, who, as often happens in this disorderly world, was a man of small means and large family. Probably the rev. gentleman fell back on that "trust in Providence," which political economists do not take into account—that "when God sent a mouth, He sent the food to fill it." I am always glad to hear this, especially when I read of people being starved. On November 10th, 1728, at Pallas, near Edgeworthstown, came this little Oliver into the world, and he repaid his father for his care in bringing him up and educating him, by immortalising him. He embalmed his father, not in that old Egyptian fashion of stuffing your parent with sweet spices, and putting him in a tomb along with an ibis and a cat, but he immortalised his father's memory by putting him into his works ;

so that, as long as the son will be remembered—and the son will be remembered as long as it shall please God that the English tongue shall be spoken, which will be for ever and ever—the father will be remembered too. Who is there that has not loved, laughed, and wept with the Man in Black in “The Citizen of the World”? Who does not know the Preacher in “The Deserted Village,” and Dr Primrose in “The Vicar of Wakefield”? Who has not given their love, their laughter, and their tears to the Rev. Charles Goldsmith? for *he* was the Man in Black, the Preacher, and the Vicar of Wakefield. Oliver was an ungracious child, but he embalmed and immortalised his father; he made us love him, and laugh at him, and pity him, and weep for him, so that if he could come into the flesh again, he would forgive the boy all his follies,—because there never was a father yet upon whom a son bestowed knighthood as Oliver bestowed immortality upon his father.

Charles Goldsmith when Oliver was born was “passing rich on forty pounds a year.” Promotion came, and he woke up from forty to two hundred pounds, and the living of Kilkenny West. Protestant and a clergyman, rich in children, poor in pence, better fortune came to him when the rector of Kilkenny West went to glory. Happy arrangement for those who are waiting for succession, for if the old ones did not die, what would become of the young ones’ chances of promotion? I don’t know who the rector of Kilkenny West was, I have forgotten; but whoever he was, he happily went to join the heavenly choir, and the result was that the Rev. Charles Goldsmith moved up from £40 to £200 a year. What a move! Of course £200 is nothing to people who roll in wealth, and who belong to a town where pen-making realizes £70,000 in two days for its pictures; but when the news came of the death of the incumbent of Kilkenny West to a man who had a wife and six small children and forty pounds a year it would be difficult for that man not to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” What liturgical expressions the Rev. Charles Goldsmith made use of I don’t know; but at the call of Providence he became the vicar of Kilkenny West, and it is evident that he was resigned to Providence.

He went to the lovely village of Lissoy, which enthusiasts have endeavoured to make themselves believe is the original of “Sweet

Auburn, loveliest village of the plain." As a matter of fact, Lissoy was anything but a lovely village, and if anybody "deserted" it, he had the best reasons for going.

The first person who put a book into Oliver's hand was a woman named Elizabeth Delap, and this was her boast to her latest breath: she also said that Oliver was a dull boy, and impenetrably stupid. Dr Johnson said that Goldsmith was a plant which flowered late; but Washington Irving said he flowered early, and came to fruit late, which is rather a truer statement, horticulturally considered. From the village dame to the village school-master was Oliver's next step, and it was not a long journey; it *is* not even now. The village school-master was a Mr Byrne, who was a retired quartermaster of an Irish regiment, and had served in Marlborough's wars. He believed in fairies more than in fluxions, and in ghosts more than in the classics; he knew more of the rich mythical glory of nonsense than of that dull pedant Virgil, or those Roman historians, under which you and I had in our youth, as it seemed for our sins, to groan.

The most pitiable thing Oliver had to contend with was—what do you think? Oliver had the small-pox, and he had it in the confluent form. We have it on the authority of the doctors that it was "confluent" small-pox. Small-pox is bad; but *confluent* small-pox! If any of you think that for your sins you deserve to be tormented in fire and brimstone, I warn you that I am free to say *Bon voyage*; but with regard to the deserts of others, you had better be careful, for "with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again." Some of you, I know, are so grounded in common sense, so steeped in philosophy, so lost in enlightenment, that you say, "What does it matter to a man whether he is good-looking or not?" Then you know little of life. Good looks, always despised and envied of those who have them not, little valued of those who have them, have awful power. They save introductions. If you are good-looking you need have no card engraved, you may go into anybody's society and be welcomed; but if you have a snub nose like poor Goldsmith, if you have had "confluent small-pox," and are covered with its marks, you will require a card of recommendation and a testimonial. Therefore, never say it is a small thing to be ugly. It is a terrible thing to be ugly! it is a rock, a mountain, an obstruction, and a hin-

drance; and it should be counted in any man's way to glory, that he had this Alp to cross. This poor lad had confluent small-pox, which spoilt all his little claim to manly beauty. He was ugly, ungainly, ill-looking. At Elphin, Athlone, Edgeworthstown, at every school he went to, there was the consenting verdict, that he was a stupid, heavy blockhead, little better than a fool. Everybody made fun of him—"the blockhead of the parish," "the fool of the neighbourhood." One woman, with one of those flashes of inspiration of which women are occasionally guilty, said that he had "two natures." All the quaintest and strongest and most loveable of mankind come, in the idea of some people, under the homely definition, "ill-baked" ones. One bed holds the saint and the sinner, one frame the child of God and the child of the world. So this man had two natures, and if ever anyone tries to make them into one it will take him a very long time, and I don't know whether he will ever succeed. Goldsmith had two natures, and he had them both very heartily, but he never fused them. Let his poverty, his small-pox, his ugliness plead for him. Think of the intense, uneasy consciousness of supposed defects—one of the worst burdens man or woman can carry about the world. To suppose that nobody likes you, and that nobody can like you; to think that you are "a fright"—*that* on the women's side; to think that you are "a fool"—*that* on the men's side—a booby, hideous, ugly, and scarcely to be tolerated; this is a sore and heavy burden to bear, and Goldsmith had to bear it.

Oliver's father gave him a strange education, which the son has set forth in one of his immortal works. He said, "My father loved all the world, and fancied that all the world loved him." Beautiful illusion! The one was solid truth; but the other, mirage. Oliver was told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; he was taught to consider all the wants of mankind as his own. This lesson he soon learnt. He learnt to regard "the human face divine" with affection and esteem. "We were wound up," he says, "to be mere machines of pity, and rendered, so, incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse, made either by real or affected distress. In a word, we were taught to give away thousands, before we had learned the art of getting a farthing." This was Oliver Goldsmith all over. These Goldsmiths never wanted to get; they were only born to give. So it

is even now. In this disorderly world, as I have before called it, those who have do not give, and those who have not, give. It is one of the crying sins of our time, that the men who have are scrubs, and the men who have not are profuse, generous, and charitable. There is a compensation in this, you see. If the man who had much gave much, he would be a monopolist, and therefore God has ordered it that those who have shall not give, and that those who have not shall give. All these Goldsmiths were alike in this. They were like princes in the affairs of the heart ; in the affairs of the world they were fools. Granted that they had anything to give, they were princes ; but as they had nothing to give, they were usually beggars.

This dull, incapable blockhead, Oliver, showed, by one or two boyish sallies at the expense of those who played tricks upon him, that he was clever ; and his family, thinking they saw hopes of him, selected the Church as the future field for the display of his talent. Thus he became a sizar at Trinity College, Dublin. Poor scholar ! marked by his poverty from head to foot ; distinguished as poor by the cap that he wore ; bound to sweep out courts, to carry out victuals, and to serve at table.

There is one incident in his last holidays before entering at Trinity, which is worth narrating. He had borrowed a hack, and he had got a guinea. He mounted the horse, and with his first guinea throbbing all over him, Oliver rode about. He felt like I felt with my first half-crown—he found in it electricity and magnetism, which produced an attraction between it and the nearest pastry-cook's ; he was a capitalist and a patron. Oliver had a guinea and a horse ! A guinea is enough to turn any young man's head ; but a guinea on horseback ! He was a master of the art of the *vis inertiae* of jolliness. Did he ride like a courier ? Not he. He loitered, and loafed, and lagged, and potted, and stuck about, and stayed to look at everything, till at last, instead of having got far on his journey, he found himself towards nightfall in the streets of that dismal little hole, Ardagh. Here he asked his way to "the best house in the place," meaning the best public-house. But the man of whom he inquired was the wag of the village, and he directed him to the finest gentleman's house in the place. So up to the house rode glorious Oliver, called for what he wanted, ordered his horse to be put up, ordered supper,

and invited his landlord's wife and daughters (they were pretty) to join him. Before he went to bed, he gave instructions for a hot cake to be prepared for him for breakfast. The gentleman of the house was a humourist, and entered heartily into the fun. Next morning, when Oliver called for his bill, he found out his mistake, as there was nothing to pay. This incident Oliver Goldsmith put into "She Stoops to Conquer." I read the play the other week, to see whether I could laugh at it, and I could. I have never seen it on the stage, but wish I had; for, well acted, it must be screaming.

One of Goldsmith's peculiarities was that he turned all his history into his books. You could read his life from his books. He had a happy art of using his own misfortunes, and he had also the happy art of being virtuous in his books, though not altogether virtuous out of them. His life was often the thrums and ends and underwork of his writings. He had two sides: the under side, his life; the upper side, the golden, glorious, beautiful side, his works. He gave good advice, in consequence of never having taken it. He was one of those men of whom I have known several, who, by his faults, his follies, his genius, his fooleries, his blunders, his mistakes, and his nonsenses, learned, even as a preacher would learn, to preach well on virtue, because of his acquaintance with vice. For a man preaches all the better for being a sinner. "Oh, but," you will say, "a man ought to practise what he preaches." So he ought, no doubt; but there would not be so many good preachers as there are if everyone of them did. Again, you may say, "How could Goldsmith write so many beautiful things without having practised them?" The answer is that if he had practised them he would never have written them. Goldsmith was a prince of moralists, a king of maxims, a master of apophthegms, lord of proverbs. How did he know them? By never acting upon them.

So poor Goldsmith, longing after good, but having it not, and by not having it understanding it all the more, put all that he was not into his works, and shed an everlasting glory on his memory. His life was one side of a medal, and when he wrote he turned it over. His works are his biography reversed.

Oliver had a sister named Catherine, who had privately married a Mr Hodgson, the son of a gentleman of property, and

the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, indignant that it should be thought any man should make a sacrifice to marry into his family, scraped together £400, gave it to his daughter, and impoverished the rest of the family for ever. Just like the Goldsmiths; £400 to one, and beggary to the rest.

Oliver hated his menial position at Trinity: he had a savage tutor, a loathing disposition, an ability to write ballads, some ability to sing, and a fearful propensity to blow off steam through a flute.

In 1747, poor old Charles Goldsmith, to whom I make my reverent bow whenever I read the "Vicar of Wakefield," died. Oliver, fortunately, had a kind uncle, named Contarine, who helped him. Oliver now pawned his books, and wrote street-ballads for five shillings a piece, sneaking out in the evenings to hear them sung in the streets. The five shillings he seldom took home with him, but yielded it up to the importunities of the first beggar he met. One day he gave away his bed-clothes, and then, as he felt cold, he ripped open the tick and got into the feathers, and there he was found lying up to his chin in them. Yet this man could sponge on his old mother, and on his uncle Contarine. I love the man, for I cannot help it; but I am ashamed of him.

He tried for a rich scholarship, but failed, and bagged an exhibition of thirty shillings. Then, that very night, he got up a dance in his own rooms in the college. The tutors would have winked at it had there been no women present; but jolly Oliver didn't see the fun of two awkward male gabies waltzing by themselves, and so he invited a likely girl or two. The result was that Mr Wilder, his tutor, walked in and knocked Oliver down, and then Oliver pawned a few books for a shilling, and went to Cork. He lived for three days on that shilling. 'There's a genius! He dined, after twenty-four hours' fast, on a handful of grey peas, given to him by a girl at a wake, and then he went back to Lissoy. His brother rigged him out afresh, effected a reconciliation with his tutor, and sent him back to college. In 1749 he obtained his B.A. Of course, he was at the bottom of the list. Then he returned home to his mother at Ballymahon, and, having to wait for two years before he could take orders, he spent the time as an idler, helping his mother, writing scraps of verse, singing, fishing, learning French from Irish priests, and throwing the hammer.

Now I don't say that all this was a sign of genius, but I do say that if Goldsmith had not had genius, he would not have weathered the storm. People talk about the sins of men of genius, but they never remember that it is genius which carries them through their sins, and brings them out immortal at last.

The two years over, Oliver was old enough to present himself for orders, but he had a disinclination for the clerical profession—he said he was not good enough for it. I like Oliver for that, and I believe what he said, for deep down below all his nonsenses there was a heart of goodness, which made him shrink back in this case. But there was the bayonet of poverty behind him, urging him on, and he went before the Bishop of Elphin, and was plucked. Why? He went up for ordination in a pair of scarlet breeches, and what could scarlet breeches mean but the flesh? of the earth, earthy; of the flesh, fleshly!

His friends were now satisfied that he was utterly undone. They pitied him because there was no harm in him, he was so good-natured; and then Goldsmith said, "When your friends begin to advise you, they begin to despise you." What an apophthegm! His uncle Contarine, patient and true, got him a tutorship, which he held for a year; then he accused one of the family of cheating at cards, and he was of course discharged at once.

He started off again with £30 in his pocket and a good horse under him—America in the distance. On his way to America he went to Cork, and there he stayed for six weeks, during which time he spent every penny he had, and exchanged his good horse for one he appropriately named "Fiddleback." Then he went back to his mother, who did not receive him altogether cordially, whereupon he said, "And now, my dear mother, after having struggled so hard to get back to you, I wonder you are not more rejoiced to see me." This is one of his immortal sentences, which is worth embalming, it is so deliciously simple. In Cork, he said, he had taken his passage on board ship for America; but he went on a little country excursion, and, meanwhile, the wind changed, and the captain sailed off without him.

Then he started for London to study law, having with him £50, given to him by his uncle Contarine. But in Dublin he met a friend, and with him he gambled till every stiver he had

was gone. Then he wrote to his uncle, asking his forgiveness, and went home to his mother again, who again did not welcome him cordially. A prodigal son once in a way was all very well; but she could not stand a prodigal son *always* going away, and *always* coming back.

Dean Goldsmith—the only big-wig in the family—then recommended that Oliver should study medicine, so he went to Edinburgh as a student of medicine. Edinburgh medicine, London law, Dublin divinity. What fine impartiality! At Edinburgh he preferred drinking whiskey and singing songs to the study of anatomy. He was introduced to the Duke of Hamilton, but, thinking he was taken rather as a jester than as a companion, he “cut” the Duke of Hamilton, and I admire him for it.

Scotch bailiffs are the finest bailiffs going; and as they were always looking after Goldsmith, he made up his mind that he would quit Edinburgh, and go to the University of Leyden; so he set off to go to Leyden *via* Bordeaux. At Newcastle he was arrested for a Jacobite; at Sunderland he was arrested by a tailor, and so, fortunately, the ship sailed without him, for it was wrecked at the mouth of the Garonne. At last he got to Leyden, and the old story was enacted there—carelessness, gambling, debt. He borrowed money from a fellow-student, and spent it all but a guinea in purchasing roots from a florist’s garden, to send to his uncle Contarine. Then he set out as tourist over Europe, with a guinea, one shirt, and a flute. What cheerfulness! Whenever he approached a peasant’s house at nightfall, he played one of his merry tunes, and procured lodging and subsistence for the next day. That tour produced the beautiful poem entitled “The Traveller,” one of the grandest poems in the English tongue, for that “Traveller” of Goldsmith’s is treasured by every man as immortal. Then he was tutor for a while to a young man who had had a fortune left him; but they parted company; and at Louvain, it is stated, he obtained his degree of Bachelor of Physic. (I hope this is true, but I doubt it.) Somewhere he met Voltaire, Diderot, and Fontenelle. Soon he was again in London, and there he went through much obscure misery.

He started as an apothecary to the poor; but he was poorer than his patients. A poor patient recommended him to Samuel Richardson, the author of “Clarissa,” and a publisher. Then he

was a reader and corrector for the press in Salisbury Court. He talked of going to decipher the inscriptions on the written mountains of the East. It is true he understood nothing of Arabic, or of the language written on the mountains; but he could interpret £300 a year—that was a hieroglyphic he could perfectly understand. He did not go to the East, however.

Soon after this, Oliver was admitted as usher into Dr Milner's academy, at Peckham. There, poor fellow, he gave all his money to beggars, except what he spent in sweetmeats for the boys. Bullied by his professor, snubbed by the doctor's wife because he was ugly, abused by the boys because he was an usher, and compelled to sleep with a French tutor, "who," he said, "disturbs me for an hour every night in papering and filletting his hair, and stinks worse than carrion with rancid pomatum when he lays his head beside me on the bolster"—this was his life. Poor Oliver was up early and late. For what is the use of having a servant, excepting to illustrate the propriety of burning a candle at both ends? Have them up at six, and keep them up till eleven; that is their destiny, for that they were born. Then Goldsmith falls in with a bookseller called Griffiths, who comes down to dine at the academy. Griffiths was on the look-out to bag authors cheap; and, after a little conversation (for Goldsmith could not talk many minutes to any but fools, without proving that he was not a muff), it was settled that Oliver should write for the *Monthly Review*, which Griffiths was publishing. So he leaves the academy, and goes to board and lodge, with a very small salary, at Griffiths', and to devote himself to the *Monthly Review*. Grub Street had a new recruit, and literary hacks another addition. But there was not only a Mr Griffiths, there was a *Mrs* Griffiths! and if you have wandered as much about the world as I have, and have visited as many houses, you will understand with what a fine tremor a man is introduced to Mrs G. You write to Mr G., and say by what train you will arrive. If a very courteous man, he sends to the station to meet you; if a business man, he meets you at the door. How I have watched for the door opening to admit Mrs G., knowing that fifty male Griffiths could avail me nothing if Mrs G. were a tartar. Well, Mrs Griffiths thought she was literary, by virtue of being Mr Griffiths' wife. *He* was not literary, and she was less so; but he thought he was, and she,

being Mrs Griffiths, thought she was too. So, whatever Oliver wrote, these unpleasant Griffiths tinkered and improved. Fancy, Mrs Griffiths improving what Oliver Goldsmith wrote !

I have no time to trace all the fugitive pieces he wrote while there. Goldsmith never left London again, excepting for a short visit to Paris. He was ready to do anything—Jack-of-all-trades, master of none, until, by-and-bye, he became master of the human heart, and writer of two or three of the deepest, truest, sweetest things men have ever written.

But he wrote *anything*. He would have written a Persian grammar at a month's notice, though he didn't know where Persia was. He wrote history of all sorts ; criticisms, essays, anything. Things went on pretty well for some time, but Oliver could not stand Griffiths, with the alternations of Mrs Griffiths. Griffiths said Goldsmith was idle, and Goldsmith said that Griffiths did not treat him with respect. What scrub ever found a servant who was not "idle" ? What she-scrub ever found a drab-of-all-work who was not "a slut" ?

So Oliver went back to Milner's Academy ; but here he was required not only to teach the boys, but to thrash them. That dear heart, who loved all things great and small, who wrote a protest for dogs, must he thrash ? It was not in him, he could not do it. But before he left Milner's there comes good news. There is a chance of his getting a medical appointment, through interest, at a factory on the Coromandel coast. He knew nothing about medicine, but that didn't matter ; anybody could learn it very quickly, he thought. According to the Goldsmithian theory, medicine did not embrace anatomy, it simply included a couple of pages out of the pharmacopœia, and a great deal of human stupidity and human credulity. But before he could take the appointment some sort of certificate was necessary, and he determined to go up to Surgeons' Hall to be examined. He looks at his clothes—won't do ; orders a new suit—tailor doesn't respond to the order until he sees some chance of payment. So Griffiths comes in as security, the new clothes are sent in, and Goldsmith goes up to the examination. The result is very pithily set forth in the books of that admirable institution—"James Barnard, mate to an hospital ; Oliver Goldsmith, found not qualified for ditto." That was a disappointment.

Oliver then went to live in Green Arbour Court. "Pleasant place," you say. Ah! the tragedy of great cities is that the sweetest names are usually the stinkingest places. If you hear of a person who lives in Paradise Row, you may be sure he exists in the depth of degradation and in the midst of stinks. People who live in Elm Row don't know an elm from a cabbage. Green Arbour Court, then, was a little, narrow, dirty, squalid, filthy court: clothes-lines always about, perpetual washes on, infinite children about—for amongst the mysteries of nature is this one, that where means are small, brats are many—noise, soap-suds, clothes-lines with all their numberless arrangements on, common stair-cases, dirt, misery. Here was Oliver in a garret, dunned for a milk score. His landlady, poor but kind, falls behind in her rent, and the bailiffs take her husband. She goes up to her lodger; he has no money, so he strips off Griffiths' clothes and sends them to "my uncle"—no time to think if it were honest. He places his books (also Griffiths') "with a friend." Griffiths chose to call it fraud. Was it fraud? His landlady was in distress—off with the clothes and away to the pawnbroker's. Well, Griffiths was peremptory, and demanded clothes and books, or payment of both. There was a wrangle, as usual, and at last they came to terms—Goldsmith must write a life of Voltaire, for which he will be paid £20, the price of the clothes to be deducted. Griffiths, the scrub, kept two carriages—got them out of the brains of poor authors.

Now came an event. Dr Percy, member of the great Northumbrian family, dignitary of the Church, author of "Reliques of English Poetry," and, above all, a gentleman, is introduced to Oliver at a coffee-house, and Oliver invites him to visit him. How ever the Doctor found his way to Green Arbour Court is a mystery. When he got to the place there was only one chair, which the Doctor sat upon, while Goldsmith sat upon the window-sill. Whilst he was here a little girl came to the door to borrow a handful of coals. But Dr Percy was a gentleman and a man of sense, and he could see beneath these things.

Goldsmith went on writing for booksellers. He wrote in anything. About twenty magazines came out, and he wrote in them all. Then came *The Bee*, of which Goldsmith wrote nearly the whole. But in eight numbers the busy *Bee* had sucked all the honey, and its day was over.

Now Oliver commenced to rise—not out of poverty; he never managed that—but out of obscurity. Smollett was introduced to him, and a better soul still—Samuel Johnson. Dr Percy, whom I mentioned just now—ecclesiastic, aristocrat, and gentleman, was to call for Johnson to go and see Goldsmith, and he found Johnson, contrary to custom, neatly dressed. He had a clean shirt on (a very rare occurrence), his wig repowdered, his breeches buttoned, and his shoes buckled. Percy, astounded, asked him what the change meant, and Johnson said, “I heard that Goldsmith, who is a very great sloven, justifies himself by me.” What self-sacrifice! Think of the agony to Samuel Johnson of dressing neatly! What must it not have cost him to save Goldsmith! He absolutely threw himself away on Goldsmith. He powdered his wig, buttoned his breeches, buckled his shoes, for Goldsmith’s sake. But the best of intentions often lead to mischief, and this rebuke on the part of Johnson, though well meant, had an unfortunate effect, for from a sloven Goldsmith became one of the most fantastic, egregious dandies that ever strutted about this world. He came out in all the colours of the rainbow—peach-coloured coats and plum-coloured continuations—and Johnson had to regret having taught him to be a dandy to cure him of being a sloven.

And now Boswell appeared on the scene. Was there ever such a trio seen in history?—Johnson, big, ugly, mis-shapen, hideous, half-blind, noisy, dogmatic, overbearing—“Yes, but,” said Goldsmith, “only so far as the skin goes.” Johnson represented England, though there was not much of the rose in him; Boswell represented Scotland, though he was not much like a thistle; and Goldsmith was the Irishman. Johnson, Boswell, and Goldsmith! Johnson loved Goldsmith dearly; let it be written on his tomb. Boswell didn’t care much for Goldsmith; Oliver was rather too much for him. Johnson preferred Goldsmith to Boswell, and that vain, bloated, ridiculous, ineffable tool, that greatest of toadies, that most wonderful of human asses—how could he bear to see it? Who could wonder that Boswell was always impatient of Goldsmith?

And now Goldsmith joined that famous literary club. Now don’t run away with the notion that it was a joint-stock eating-house. This club consisted of twenty-one men or thereabouts, who had brains. It meant a select circle, into which tools could

not pass—with a fiery sword drawn against fools. There were few clubs greater than this.

Poor Oliver, no richer, at last went to lodge at Mrs Fleming's. If ever there was a picture of an awful landlady—a picture of a woman who seems to get her living out of her lodgers—that picture was Mrs Fleming—stern, severe, awful. Few things are more touching than to get hold of a man's accounts when he is poor. Here is one of Goldsmith's from his landlady :

Sassafras,	-	-	os.	6d.
Lent Goldsmith,	-	-	1s.	0d. for laundress.
Lent Goldsmith,	-	-	os.	10d.
Lent Goldsmith,	-	-	1s.	2d.
Lent Goldsmith,	-	-	os.	6d. in cash.
Item—For pint of ale,	-	-	os.	2d.
„ For opodeldoc,	-	-	os.	2d.

An earlier bill showed port wine, so that poor Goldsmith had come down from port to beer. Look at these things; see the squalid distress and mean misery that they disclose, and then wonder that any man could be merry under such circumstances. Well, Goldsmith gets in a plight—in a pickle; his awful landlady insists upon having her money; the bailiff is in possession. What shall he do? He sends for Dr Johnson, who sends him a guinea by the messenger, and afterwards follows himself, and, when he gets there, finds that the guinea has already been partly expended in the purchase of a bottle of Madeira. “Never mind to-morrow! Take the gifts that God provides! Let's have a bottle of Madeira!” Then it was that poor Goldsmith, at his wits' end, foraged about, and told Johnson that he had “written a novel”—than which never truer or nobler book was written. So Johnson went out, and sold “The Vicar of Wakefield” for £60. Johnson was a bad critic, and not a very good judge; nevertheless, he pledged his word to the extent of £60. Goldsmith paid his landlady, but before she went away he gave her a downright good scolding. He would say, “You wretched, mean, sordid person, it is true I owed you a little money, but have I not given you an opportunity of being generous and Christian?”

It was fifteen months after this before that immortal book was published. Poor Oliver went through more poverty and further

borrowing. Do you wonder that men who borrow do not repay? It is a distinct gift this borrowing money. Do you expect Elijah to return anything to the ravens? Certainly not! It was a providential arrangement, and in the same way Oliver and Co. regard the money they borrow as a providential arrangement.

Then came "The Traveller," and Goldsmith, who was getting popular, thought he had better air his doctorship. Where he got it from is not known. It is a question whether he ever got it honestly. But that was no matter to Oliver. He could not be expected, however, to maintain his doctorship in the same clothes that he had before, so he breaks out in purple silk smalls, scarlet continuations, full wig, sword and cane, and airs to match. He never had but one patient, and that was a lady, who actually preferred a country apothecary to Dr Goldsmith. So Oliver determined to quit the profession.

Then came the publishing of "The Vicar of Wakefield." And you will have to read in that wonderful book how Goldsmith put there the graces he had and the graces he had not, how he taught patience in suffering, reliance on God, heroism, self-denial, gracious forgiveness. In all literature I know no such touch of that heavenly charity, of which Christians prate so much and know so little, as where Dr Primrose, on finding that his daughter has been seduced, curses the seducer, and Moses, with loving simplicity, rebukes his father. The old man replies, "Did I curse him, child? Then may Heaven forgive me and him." What a gospel of forgiveness! For this one single touch I can forgive Goldsmith all his debts, all his faults, for this one sweet touch (which theology can never do) in what fools call a novel.

Goldsmith's influence on Goethe was marvellous. Shakespeare made Schiller, and Goldsmith made Goethe. Shakespeare and Goldsmith! What more can old England want? England will live and grow, however, producing poets and great men, until America is ripe, and Australia is something different to what she is now.

After "The Vicar of Wakefield," Goldsmith wrote an English grammar for five guineas. Though now he had got to the summit, he was still very poor; but he was a friend of Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, and Samuel Johnson. Though they laughed at

him (who could help it?), though they quizzed him, yet they loved him dearly. It was enough for any man to say, "I was a friend of those three men." He was now novelist, dramatist, and poet. He wrote "The Good-Natured Man," "She Stoops to Conquer," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "The Traveller," "The Deserted Village." And now money began to come in. He had £500 in a lump. What effect do you suppose this influx of money had upon him? Did it make him a reformed character? Not a bit of it. What is bred in the bone cannot be cured by £500. He never had so much money in his life; it embarrassed him. What did he do with it? Invest it? Put it by for a rainy day? No. What does a flower do when a blaze of sunshine comes upon it? It bursts out according to its nature, displays its colours, gives forth its odour. So Goldsmith came down from his garret, spent £400 in a set of chambers, furnished them with azure morine curtains, and everything *en suite*. He lived in a garret no longer—he never had done so from choice. Of course he gets into debt; he gets deeper and deeper in debt. What is he to do? Borrow? *Of course*. What a curious world this is! In the chamber beneath sat Blackstone, writing the fourth volume of his "Commentaries," and he complained of the noise in Goldsmith's room interfering with his studies.

Poor Oliver gets worse off than ever; still he is Johnson's friend. What a lovely story that is of their walking to the Poets' Corner, and, looking at that cemetery where lie the greatest souls God ever gave to the greatest nation, Johnson says, "Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis," which means, "And perhaps our names may one day be mingled with these." Goldsmith said nothing, till at last they came to Temple Bar, where was a nice assortment of Jacobite heads, whereupon the Irishman, with the glorious wit of that glorious nation, said, "Forsitan et nostrum miscebitur *istis*." "And perhaps ours may one day be mixed with *these*."

Afterwards he wrote on "Animated Nature" (though he knew very little about it), English history, Roman history, Grecian history—anything which came to hand. Then he wrote "The Retaliator," in which he hit off all his friends. Genial, splendidly foolish and joyous, he went on building up £2000 of debt. At his death he owed that moderate and modest

amount. Poor Goldsmith died when he was only forty-five, and Burke wept; Reynolds threw down his brush, and could not work again that day; Johnson moaned and grieved. He was buried in the Temple Church, and a monument was put up to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Such is a rapid outline of the man. Always poor, always in debt, always cheerful, always imprudent, very often nearly dishonest; always generous, forgiving, merciful. Some will say, "I hope you are not going to praise him, because you might induce some of us to imitate him." My friends, you cannot. "But," you may say, "if a man like that is so loveable, others may try to imitate him." It is of no use trying; you must be *born* a Goldsmith to be one. Therefore, he may be analysed with safety. He was incurably imprudent; he would take anything from anybody, and he was equally ready to give away everything he had got. Of foresight he had none; he belonged to the hour. It would be rich to have heard anyone recommending life assurance to Goldsmith. The agony of momentary sympathy, the hysterics of the instant, the feelings of the moment carried the day. He had no other side—no reflection, not much conscience; never deliberately virtuous, never deliberately vicious, never deliberate about anything; unable to comprehend that there was such a thing as to-morrow. If these things are not the excuse, they are at any rate the explanation of the life of this wonderful man. Here is a man sponging on his father without compunction, and at the call of hysterical charity he gives away his bedclothes to a passing beggar, and gets into the tick amongst the feathers.

High animal spirits, careless nature, readiness to give and receive, gushing tenderness; these were his virtues, and they are always popular. For who can resist high spirits? These qualities may not be admirable; but they are nevertheless loveable. Some political economists may say, "These are only skin deep." That is the wonder, that skin-deep qualities can produce such an impression! But there is this peculiarity—they are the outward bloom, and, seeing the wear and tear of life, who does not doat upon these high spirits, this readiness to be pleased and to give pleasure? Now and then comes a man who, with almost all these charms, adds something of honesty, prudence, and conscience; but they are comparatively rare. Goldsmith was a

big baby, a baby to the end of his life ; but, remember, he was only half-baked, the reasonable side of his nature was never developed ; he died before he had a chance of cutting his wisdom-teeth ; he never did cut them, and he would have had to live to the age of Methuselah before he cut them. Full of vanity, and (according to wicked people) full of jealousy and envy. But remember, that vanity was not altogether wrong. Not to praise Goldsmith, not to pat him, not to pet him, was to put him out into the cold, and make him shiver. He could not bear it. He lived in the sunshine. His constant cheerfulness under all circumstances was the wonderful thing about him. I cannot esteem Goldsmith. As a moralist and teacher my face is dead against him. He is a warning, an example. But be not ashamed of loving the man. "But he did not pay his debts." No ; but you cannot be loved for paying your debts ; that is your spine ! Would that Goldsmith had had more spine. I, for one, am thankful that God sent Oliver Goldsmith into the world to teach, as he has done by his life and writings, that mercy, charity, and slowness to anger, which, through all his sad, mean, and miserable life, he never failed to show.

DR ERASMUS DARWIN AND
MISS ANNA SEWARD.

DR DARWIN, BORN 1731. DIED 1802. (FROM 4TH GEO. II. TO 42ND
GEO. III.)

MISS SEWARD, BORN 1747. DIED 1809. (FROM 20TH GEO. II. TO 49TH
GEO. III.)

IN this lecture I shall speak, first, of the noteworthy members of the society in which Dr Darwin lived.

There is nothing that I know of that lightens the spirits, as one passes through streets that are dead, dull, uninteresting, impertinent, and vulgar, like the remembrance that those streets have been trodden by the great and mighty men of the past. I need not tell you what Stratford owes to the memories of Shakespeare, or point out how a dull place like the Old Square in Birmingham is brightened by the recollection that Samuel Johnson used to live there, poor, unfriended, and unknown, with the wide world before him, and ignorant of what fate he would find in it. Then, how the market-place of that red-looking Staffordshire town * glows with glory, because the figure of the same great man, bare-headed, stands up in sorrow to do penance for a sin of his youth. That, too, is a poor-looking house in Shrewsbury, down a side-street, and quite unworthy of notice, had not the great poet, Coleridge, once preached there in his erratic days. So, when we read in Mrs Schimmel-Pennineck's book, "I was born in the evening of the 25th November, in Steelhouse Lane," we feel how delightful it is to meet with Steelhouse Lane in a book. Who would have thought it? I opened the book at random, and I was so charmed that I read it from beginning to end. Then there is her "grandfather's residence at Duddleston, a country house a mile and a half from the town. My first recollection," she says, "dates from 1782, when we removed to Hagley Road.

Hagley Road and the Five Ways were then the Clifton of Birmingham." The Clifton of Birmingham! It never struck one before. After this, surely Birmingham people will be prouder of that suburb than ever. She then removed to Great Barr, where the common visitors at the house were Boulton, Watt, Edgeworth, Thomas Day, the great Priestley, the famous Dr Parr, Dr Darwin, Herschel, Joseph Banks, the accomplished Bedington, and many others. I have met few men in this town who know the bead roll of the worthies who have walked its streets or glorified its name; but when Cockney scribblers in newspapers smile at this town and its people, and speak of Birmingham men as people who know nothing beyond the making of pins, pens, buttons, and heathen gods, showing an ignorance equalled only by their insolence, one is glad to remind them that there are more famous men associated with Birmingham than they would care to understand.

Well, Mrs Schimmel-Penninck describes how, when she was a little child, Dr Darwin came to her mother's house at Great Barr. He drove up in a carriage called a "sulky," because it only held one, and outside was a large pail for the purpose of watering the horses, and some hay and oats. In the carriage the Doctor wrote most of his works, as he travelled. It was fitted up with appliances for writing, also a knife, fork, and spoon. On one side was a file of books, and on the other a basket of fruit and sweetmeats, of which he was inordinately fond. It had a sky-light, and an awning over. Dr Darwin was of an uncouth figure, vast and massive; his head was almost buried in his shoulders; he wore a scratch-wig, tied up with a little bob-tail behind, and he had a habit of stammering, which rendered necessary the closest attention to understand what he said. His eye was keen and deeply sagacious, so keen that it enabled him to trace the signs of disease with great accuracy. He had a great horror of fermented liquors, and believed in eating largely, especially of sweetmeats. On one of these visits he spent three hours over a table of hot-house fruits, sweetmeats, and clotted cream, and, on hearing the dinner-bell ring, expressed great satisfaction that dinner would soon be ready. He tells some amusing anecdotes of his patients. He had been consulted by the Duchess of D——, who was suffering from the effects of the white enamel which she used. He

at once detected the cause of her illness, but it was tender ground to trench upon. So he told her she was poisoned, and asked her if she was quite certain of the character of her servants? He minutely examined all the cooking vessels. Then he told her that poison might be absorbed through the skin, and made inquiries about her gloves. At last she confessed that she used the white lead enamel; he supplied her with a vegetable cosmetic instead, and she recovered.

It is to this man,—physician, philosopher, and poet, who defined man as an eating, drinking, and sleeping animal, and the world as a material world, declaring all beyond that to be moonshine,—it is to this large feeding, eccentric, clever man, that I wish to direct your close attention. He was born near Newark, and was educated at St John's, Cambridge, where he "performed some poetical exercises." In 1755 he took his degree of Bachelor in Medicine, and then pursued his medical studies in London and Edinburgh. He first settled at Nottingham, but being unsuccessful there, he removed to Lichfield at the age of twenty-five, where he, according to Miss Seward, "brilliantly opened his career of fame." There was near Lichfield a young man of family, fortune, and—fever (for in this disordered world neither family nor fortune is a guarantee against fever), whose case the big-wig of the city had pronounced hopeless. In despair, this young man, this failure from Nottingham, was called in, and (again I quote Miss Seward) "by a reverse and entirely novel course of treatment, Dr Darwin gave his dying patient back to existence and health. The far-spreading report of this judiciously daring and fortunate exertion brought Dr Darwin into immediate and extensive employment, and soon eclipsed the hopes of an ingenious rival, who resigned the contest; nor afterwards did any other competitor bring his certainly ineffectual lamp into that sphere in which so bright a luminary shone." Having cured the young man of fever, Dr Darwin found business begin to flow in upon him, and he turned his thoughts on marriage, and succeeded. He married Miss Howard, "a blooming and lovely young lady of eighteen." What a couple they must have been!—something like Beauty and the Beast. I should have wondered how Miss Howard could do it, did I not know the courage of woman in facing matrimony. "He was," says Miss Seward, "somewhat above the middle size; his form

athletic and inclined to corpulence: his limbs too heavy for exact proportion. The traces of a severe small-pox; features and countenance which, when they were animated by social pleasure, were rather saturnine than sprightly; a stoop in the shoulders, and the then professional appendage, a large full-bottomed wig, gave at that early period of life an appearance of nearly twice the years he bore. He stammered extremely, but whatever he said, whether gravely or in jest, was always well worth waiting for, though the inevitable impression it made might not always be pleasant," and so on. I leave you to picture Dr Darwin; but there are things in a man which can counteract the effect of stooping shoulders, an ugly gait, and a stammering tongue. Safely married to blooming Miss Howard, let us leave Dr Darwin and view his surroundings.

There are few cities in England better worth studying than Lichfield. Lichfield Cathedral is one of the most graceful and lovely of all structures in the world—a perfect femininity of architecture, the Venus of Gothic creation. If it could be spared, it ought to be transported to the other end of Europe, in order that Englishmen might go to see it. Close by your own doors, this, one of the noblest structures in the world, standing to York Minster as a fair woman stands to a man in all his glory, I venture to say that not one in ten of you who are here to-night have ever been to see it. One of the fairest cities in this land is Lichfield, and, at the time of Darwin, it had a galaxy of talent and genius. I may dismiss Samuel Johnson, who was rather larger than the people of whom I have to speak. Darwin and Johnson never could get on well together, and, after one or two interviews, they evinced a mutual dislike, and never met again. They were like and unlike, but not enough of either. Dr Johnson wrote several letters from Lichfield about this time, and Miss Seward remarks that the name of Dr Darwin could not be found in them, and that certain others were never mentioned. Poor Miss Seward was not even named, although Sir Walter Scott said "she filled an important place in the annals of literature." So, bowing Johnson out as too big for the company, let us look at the party who used to meet around Miss Seward's tea-urn, or rather "tea-vase," to use her own phrase.

First, there was Miss Seward herself, the daughter of the Rev.

Thos. Seward. She was always described as good-looking. Although Scott said she filled an important place in literature, it was not in her blood. She sat down to it; she had a sort of literary sewing-machine, and you could see her set it to work. Miss Anna Seward was a lady who was literary of *malice prepense*. She was a poetess—she “courted the Muses.” She never sat down to verse-making without saying something about “the Muses.” She tried her feminine pen at the ponderosity of Johnson. She wrote a poetical novel called “Louise.” I think there are three vols. of “Louise,” but I have not had courage to read them. I have read through most of her poems this summer, but have not found them worth quoting. They bear the same relation to true poetry that a sampler does to a true picture. She was ingenious at ornamental needlework, and I admire the skill she has shown in making her poems as much like her needlework as possible. She wrote epitaphs, epilogues, odes, sonnets, songs, epistles, elegies, and what not. But had she inspiration? had she anything to say? Not at all. She had “literary pursuits,” and Time has taken the sponge and wiped her writings out of all living notice. I recommend them as a legitimate dissipation, as the utmost attempt in which the human mind can engage without getting any exercise of it. If that is your bent, then dip deep into Seward. She never talked, she “exercised her conversational powers.” She never talked English—not plain simple English—she always talked attitudinities. “There,” she would say, “is one that emulously and sedulously distilled the sweetness from the classic fountain.” Another “evinced an elevated mind.” Fancy evincing an elevation! Another “showed an Attic spirit in her conversation.” Of another she would say, “Beware, for she often sends out the shafts of ridicule.” She called her school-master her “revered preceptor.” Of Mrs Darwin she said, “To her he could with confidence commit the important task of rendering her children’s minds a soil fit to receive and bring to fruit the stamina of wisdom and science.” If she went for a walk, it would be, “Let us ascend this umbrageous eminence.” Of an artificial pool, which a blasphemer might call a puddle, she said, “Notice the liquid concave.” A dale in Derbyshire she called a “salvatorial dale.” One is puzzled, and thinks it means salubrious; but then comes the thought—“Salvator Rosa”—yes, that is

it. A valley is "irriguous from various springs, and swampy from their plenitude." What a word—"irriguous!" You look upwards, and she asks you, "Are you regarding the stellar host?" I might reply that I am, but I do not know it. So this wonderful lady flowed on. She once said a good thing, and she said it to Dr Johnson. She bearded that lion in his den, and he did not like it. He was breathing out threatenings and slaughter about the Americans—they were rascals, pirates, and robbers; he would burn and destroy them. Miss Seward said, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have most injured."

It was pretty to see her sitting down to her needlework—to her verses—and to study her "insertions." If you don't know what "insertions" are, you can ask your wives. So Anna Seward went on writing her pieces, and she left her remains—I mean her literary remains—to Sir Walter Scott, and he published them (who would be an executor?), and said, "She filled a distinguished place in the annals of literature." There is no authentic portrait of Scott when he wrote that, or I should like to have seen it. I am sorry for Scott. I admire him sitting down to wipe out a mountain of debt; but sitting down with this lady's remains before him! I don't know how poor Walter Scott came to undertake the duty. But he did his duty like a man, and brought out her poems and three volumes of letters. Johnson told her that he did not know anything equal in poetry to her description of the sea round the North Pole, and her ode on the death of Captain Cook. Now, either Johnson's knowledge of poetry was narrow, or his judgment was not good—as it was not. She wrote a life of Darwin, and she described the Botanical Society because Darwin was a member. Well, one of the company who met around Miss Seward's tea-vase was Archdeacon Vyse, described by her as "a man of prioric talents in a metrical impromptu." How lovely it must have been between the tea-cups—Vyse going off in a "metrical impromptu!" Another was Boothby, afterwards Sir Brooke Boothby; and another was Jackson. Miss Seward's descriptions of Boothby and Jackson are ridiculously absurd. She said of Boothby that he "wrote a convincing refutation of that splendid, dazzling, and misleading sophistry, 'Burke on the French Revolution.'" Am I to bow to Boothby? What! Burke bowled by Boothby?—

convinced, refuted, put down, overthrown, defeated, done for, killed by Boothby? Never! Another man was Mr Munday, and another Mr Richard Lowell Edgeworth, father of Maria Edgeworth. He was a mechanical philosopher, a member of the Irish Parliament, and a good Irish landlord—in the last capacity worth chronicling, for the list of such has not been very long.

The next is a man to whom I, for one, owe many a sweet hour—Thomas Day, the author of “Sandford and Merton;” a man far more worth studying than any extinct reptile, or dodo, or any other creature that ever pestered the world. He was a fine specimen of the doctrinaire; and a doctrinaire is a man who, having a theory correct and sound, on which he is entirely certain, insists that all things shall be tested, tried, brought up, regulated, and set in order by that theory. Facts he did not care for—if they agreed with his theories, well and good; if not, “so much the worse for the facts.” He cared nothing for wealth, birth, or society. Having been jilted in one engagement with the fair sex, he set about the wonderful experiment of growing a wife for himself, and carried out the experiment by proceeding to Shrewsbury, in company with his friend Bicknell, a barrister, and there choosing, on certain liberal conditions, two little maidens aged twelve, one dark and the other blonde, from the Foundling Hospital. He called the fair girl Lucretia, and the dark one Sabrina. With these he went to France, in order that, not knowing the language of those around them, he might have them entirely under his own training, and they might learn everything from him. Here they led Day a dreadful life. They quarrelled, fought, called each other ill names, and had the small-pox. Day attended to them night and day. They returned to England, and it soon became clear that he must part with one or the other. Which was he to part with? the dark Sabrina, or the fair Lucretia? The dark maiden was the favourite, and Lucretia was properly provided for. So in eight months he had got rid of one of them. The other, Sabrina, he intended to bring up in Spartan fortitude; so he took her to Lichfield, and set about putting her under a course of discipline. He poured hot wax upon her naked arms, and fired pistols at her which she believed to be loaded. But she didn't take kindly to the wax, and she screamed at the pistols. She broke down under it. The experiment failed. She even told one

of his secrets to the servants, and it was evident to him that one who screamed under pain and who divulged his secrets could not be his wife. He was the soul of honour, and he provided for the girl. Next, he made love to Honora Sneyd, the sweetheart of poor Major André, and she refused him. He immediately offered himself to her sister, Elizabeth, who said she would try to love him, if he were not so uncommonly odd-looking. So he went to Paris, this rough wild man, to take lessons in deportment, in order that he might not appear so uncouth before her; and the consequence was that he came back in a sort of pie-bald condition, which caused Miss Elizabeth to say that she thought she could have borne "Thomas Day, blackguard," as he used jestingly to call himself, better than Thomas Day, fine gentleman. He then gave her up, and at last married Miss Mills, a lady who sincerely loved him, and who rendered the evening of Day's life charming and happy. After his untimely death she never saw the sunlight, and, at the end of two years, died of heart-breaking grief for his loss. He fell a victim to a theory. He did not believe in horse-breaking, but thought that if a colt were spoken to in a kind and conversational way, his heart would be touched, and that he would respond to the sentiment, and be as docile as a lamb. He tried the experiment on a depraved animal, received a kick and died.

Almost the whole of a man's nature and a woman's peculiarities go into their letters, therefore a letter is generally the greatest betrayal of character that it is possible to get at. I have a letter here of Miss Seward's. It is about the size of a newspaper, and concerns the question of slavery, about which Josiah Wedgewood desired to enlist Miss Seward's "muse." But Miss Seward's muse, never very unwilling, seems to have declined the advocacy of our black brothers. In this well-known letter, Miss Seward, after touching on a host of subjects, pleasantly refers to Bentley's "discriminating praise" of her productions.

And here is one of the equally well-known anecdotes told of Dr Darwin by his Lichfield admirer and biographer. "On one occasion, Dr Darwin had a large party to tea. His servant announced a strange lady and gentleman. The female was a conspicuous figure, ruddy, corpulent, and tall. She held by the arm a little, meek-looking, pale, effeminate man, who, from his close adherence to the lady, seemed to consider himself as under her protection.

‘Dr Darwin,’ said she, ‘I seek you not as a physician, but as a *belle esprit*. I make this husband of mine’ (and she looked down with a side-glance upon the animal) ‘treat me every summer with a tour through one of the British counties, to explore whatever it contains worth the attention of ingenuous people. On arriving at the several inns on our route, I always search out the man of the vicinity most distinguished for his genius and taste, and introduce myself, that he may direct, as the objects of our examination, whatever is curious in nature, art, or science. Lichfield will be our head-quarters during several days. Come, Doctor, whither must we go? What must we investigate to-morrow and the next day, and the next? Here are my tablets and pencil.’ ‘You arrive, madam, at a fortunate juncture. To-morrow you will have an opportunity of surveying an annual exhibition perfectly worth your attention. To-morrow, madam, you will go to Tutberry bull-running.’ The satirical laugh with which he stammered out the last word more keenly pointed this shy yet broad rebuke to the vanity and arrogance of her speech. Her large features swelled and her eyes flashed with anger. ‘I was recommended to a man of genius, and I find him insolent and ill-bred.’ Then, gathering up her meek and alarmed husband under the shadow of her broad arm and shoulder, she strutted from the room. After the departure of this curious couple, his guests told their host he had been very unmerciful. ‘I chose,’ replied he, ‘to avenge the cause of the little man, whose nothingness was so ostentatiously displayed by his lady wife. Her vanity has had a smart emetic.’”

The doctor’s successful treatment of the singular case of the Countess of Northesk, and the carefully-related offer (not acted upon, however) of Miss Seward to part with a portion of her own blood for the contemplated injections, are also worth referring to.

But we must now look at Dr Darwin as a lover. He had married a blooming girl of eighteen, and she died all too early, leaving him three sons. Miss Seward’s way of telling it is, that “the frequency of her maternal situation probably shortened her days.” In 1778, there came to Lichfield Mrs Pole and her children, who were “suffering from a dangerous quantity of *cicuta*.”* Dr Darwin

* The name of the common hemlock. It is an active poison, producing tremors, vertigo, a violent burning at the stomach, epilepsy, convulsions, spasms of the jaw, a flowing of blood from the ears, tumefaction of the abdomen, and death.

took them to his home, and cured the little ones. Mrs Pole was in the full bloom of her youth and beauty; in fact, her youth was young, and her beauty was great; and Dr Darwin went through the successive stages. He began with admiring; he passed on to what is called "esteem;" he ended with what is called "love." He sent to Birmingham to order a tea-vase, and he wrote some verses which were not so hot as I hope the tea was. He was much given to pondering upon this lady, who herself fell ill of a fever, and Dr Darwin was called in. Very naturally. He had cured the children; what more likely than that he should save the mother, his *inamorata*? He prescribed, and was then dismissed; and then this strange, hard, eccentric, extraordinary, cold-blooded materialist, this man of science—what do you think he did? He passed the whole night beneath a tree opposite her room, "watching the passing and re-passing lights." He broke out into verses when he got home. In 1780 died Colonel Pole, and what was the consequence? Dr Darwin's "adored Laura was now free." According to Miss Seward, however, he saw her "surrounded by rivals whose time of life had nearer parity with her own." The fact is, the colonel was twice as old as his lady, to whom he left £600 a year. The blooming lady recovered from the fever, with £600 a year; and still the doctor has hopes. "Early in her widowhood she was rallied in a large company upon Dr Darwin's passion for her, and she was asked what she would do with her captive philosopher. 'He is not very fond of churches, I believe,' said she, 'and if he would go there for my sake, I shall scarcely follow him. He is too old for me.' 'Nay, madam, what are fifteen years on the right side?' She replied with an arch smile, 'I have had so much of the right side.'" That might have put out any man's fire, but still not the doctor's. He was twice her age, clumsy, a stutterer, ugly, and, in addition to his aboriginal ugliness, he had, in the pursuit of one of his theories, acquired a lameness, which added to his natural graces; but he had brains. He succeeded in spite of his clumsiness, stammering, lameness, and age, and Mrs Pole "descended from her Laura eminence to wifeness;" and all the young men who were enamoured of her and £600 a year, found themselves distanced by the man of science, the stuttering physician, the man whose reputation was not very good in genteel circles. This triumphant result, then, shows the power of brains, which are the

greatest power in this world. Brains won, as they always will win, against every force or power that can be brought against them. No matter how rich you are ; where there are plenty of brains there is your master, and you had better own to it and give way at once. But on one point the lady insisted, and that was leaving Lichfield. I cannot tell why. Perhaps it was the recollection of the children ailing from *cicuta*. So Dr Darwin yielded to love and removed to Derby, where he was equally prosperous and successful ; for patients continued to come to him from all parts.

On the morning of the 18th April 1802 he sat down to write a letter to Edgeworth. He was apparently in good health ; but he never concluded the letter, which in its unfinished state was sent to Edgeworth, with the record on the empty page of the lamented death of his correspondent. Once more Miss Seward “discharges a last duty,” and

“Sheds the tribute of a tear.”

“Thus,” she says, “in one hour was extinguished the vital light which the preceding hour had shone in flattering brightness, promising duration—such is often the cunning flattery of nature—that light which, through half a century, had diffused its radiance and its warmth so widely ; that light in which penury had been cheered, in which science had expanded, before whose influence disease had continually retreated, and death so often turned aside his levelled dart.” For such a sentence it was worth while almost to die.

Darwin was a far-seeing, hopeful, sanguine man. He was a man who lived before his time ; he foresaw the future of steam, of balloons, of the application of sanitary laws, and in some respects he saw even beyond the present age. He foresaw the triumph of the diver’s art, and predicted that in half a century it would be safer to travel through the ocean than over it. When Franklin brought down the lightning, Darwin said that very soon the rain would be brought down from the clouds. And why not? It is only because men are ignorant bunglers that the making of rain is not a common thing. The day will come when people will order showers. All these things are matters of strict law, and chance has nothing to do with them. What seems chance is

men's ignorance and folly. Darwin understood what steam was, and foresaw what it was to do—

“Soon shall thy arm, unconquered steam, afar
 Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car ;
 Or, on wide waving wings expanded, bear
 The flying chariot through the realms of air.
 Fair crews triumphant, beaming from above,
 Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move,
 Or warrior bands alarm the gaping crowd,
 And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud.”

He foresaw steam dragging slow barges—who would have thought it possible? He foresaw it years ago, and we have done it. Men of science travel fast, and commerce drags lumberingly on behind, He was a sanitary reformer long before it was understood in theory, and it is not carried out much in practice yet in this enlightened town. Hereafter it will be a source of wonder to us how barbarous we must be to suffer the streets of the town to go unswept day by day, when Darwin has pointed out long ago in a beautiful sentence, that “the purity and healthfulness of the towns may contribute to the fruitfulness and health of the surrounding country.”

But Darwin was before his time. He fore-shadowed in his life the scheme which bears the name of his illustrious grandson—the transmutation of species—about which good people are making such a hubbub. We know that this theory of the origin of species by means of natural selection has every scientific probability on its side ; to say that it is settled would be to leap the leap of the theorist before he is accompanied by the patient bearer of the facts. But what is the hubbub all about? Why don't you, my dear friends, keep quiet. Some of you are afraid of Darwinism, just as good people have been afraid of astronomy and geology, and as they are still afraid of biology. They made a hubbub about the astronomers ; but astronomy being established as a lawful nuisance, they came down upon the geologists, and the geologists won. Not to be a geologist *now*, is shameful. So biology will establish itself as firmly upon scientific results as ever a science in the world. What is the use of howling? I have no fear of the knowledge of God's laws—men and women will be men and women still, whatever they may be descended from. Will scientific

knowledge ever do away with the loves, the passions, the fears, the hopes of mankind? Never. You had better give in. What is it to you? God's law and man's love remain. If it is shown that you and I are descended from apes, there is no diminution of our feelings and powers. It is all the idle dream of alarmed people, who never have penetrated to the science and source of things, and who are alarmed at the slightest departure from the practices of their fathers. It is well known to the great men of science that the ebb and flow of the tide, the rising sun, the falling dew, the coming frost, are governed by unchangeable laws. Of course, here and there in this civilised country there are people who do not believe this, who consider that every time we have an eclipse the moon is undergoing a consumption. Well, if these things are governed by unchanged cosmical law, why accuse any man of want of reverence because he believes that the growth of species may also have been brought about by the intervention of agencies of a similar nature? Let us remember man was created "out of the dust;" and if I had to choose my great grandfather between the dust of the earth and the ape, I should prefer the ape. But man will remain man to the end, in spite of all discoveries. He is not only related to the earth, and everything in it; he is related, on the other side, to all that is beyond it. You cannot alter that, and you never will. Love will not die out, even if we become learned in follicles. If you take the word "hair," I find it is thus described: "The hairy covering of mammalia, composed of long, delicate processes of a horny substance, which grow from bulbs in or beneath the skin. Each hair is contained at the lower part in a delicate sheath or follicle," &c. Would you put the hair of a woman's head away, or refuse a curl because it was of "a horny substance"? or "grew from a bulb"? No; love will still go on, and love-locks still be precious.

" Her brow, fit home for daintiest dreams,
With such a dawn of light was crowned;
And reeling ringlets shower'd around,
Like sunny sheaves of golden beams."

I am very learned in *eyes*. I have in my time discoursed on the optic nerve, the lachrymal apparatus, the maxillary fissure; and I know all about the lamina cribrosa, the sclerotic membrane,

and, above all, I am great upon the choroid membrane. But to a man—not a shrunken miserable creature, dried up, behind a pair of spectacles; but to man full of life, and with warm blood in his veins—there is nothing so beautiful as a woman's eye. He will not examine for the maxillary fissure, or bother about the choroid membrane, but think on Ben Jonson. The man of science gives way to the poet, for a greater than he has come, and in Ben Jonson I read:

“ Do but look on her eyes ! they do light
 All that love's world compriseth.
 Do but look on her hair ! it is bright
 As Love's star when it riseth.
 Do but mark—her forehead's smother
 Than words that soothe her ;
 And from her arched brows, such a grace
 Sheds itself through the face
 As alone there triumphs to the life
 All the gain, all the good of the element's strife.

Have you seen but a bright lily grow
 Before rude hands have touched it ?
 Have you marked but the fall o' the snow
 Before the soil has smutched it ?
 Have you felt the wool of beaver
 Or swan's down ever ?
 Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar,
 Or the nard in the fire ?
 Or have tasted the bag o' the bee ?
 O so white ! O so soft ! O so sweet is she !”

CHAUCER.

BORN 1328. DIED 1400. (FROM 2ND EDWARD III. TO 2ND HENRY IV.)

IF Chaucer had had the good fortune to write in Latin or Greek, the English nation would have given themselves great pains to interpret his meaning; but as he had the misfortune to write in English at an early period, there are few, even educated people, who put themselves to the trouble of comprehending his great and glorious poems.

As our time is limited, it will be very wise to confine our attention to two or three distinct points. I wish first to convince you that Chaucer was not only a great poet considering his age, but one of the five great poets the world ever produced. Then I shall have to show you that Chaucer may be read fluently in his own peculiar language, without the modernising aid of Dryden, who was unequal to the task, or of Pope, who could not do it though he tried. Afterwards I shall put before you certain passages to justify any eulogiums I may pass.

Of the man, very little is known; and though whole quartos have been written about him, like many other biographies there is very little in them. Honestly speaking, the life of Chaucer might be written in a very small compass; but it is so mixed up and involved with the political history of his noble friend and patron, John of Gaunt, that if one does not know much of the latter one cannot know much of the former; and if one does, then there is hardly any necessity to speak about Chaucer in this respect.

We will, therefore, dismiss very briefly what is acknowledged in the poet's career—his education at Cambridge and Oxford, his studies in the Temple, his admission to the splendid and brilliant court of Edward III. as a page, his there becoming a protégé of the powerful Duke of Lancaster, his rapid rise and growth in favour with the chivalrous monarch under whom he served, his successful

mission as ambassador to Genoa, his subsequent rewards and pensions, his acquisition of wealth, his reduction to poverty by the death of John of Gaunt and the King, and, finally, his death in quietude and seclusion in the country. When dying, he wrote those beautiful and oft-quoted verses known as "The good counsel of Geoffrey Chaucer," which will show with what true piety and with what admirable knowledge of the world this good man went out of it.

"Fly from the press,¹ and dwell with soothfastness;²
 Suffice unto thy good,³ though it be small;
 For hoard hath hate, and climbing tickleness,
 Praise hath envy, and weal is blent owre all;⁴
 Savour⁵ no more than thee behovë shall,
 Rede⁶ well thyself that other folk canst rede—
 And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.⁷

"Painë thee not each crooked to redress,
 In trust of her that turneth as a ball:
 Great rest standeth in little business,
 Beware also to spurn against a nail,⁸
 Strive not as doth a crockë⁹ with a wall.
 Doomë¹⁰ thyself that doonest others dede,
 And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

"That¹¹ thee is sent receive in buxomness;¹²
 The wrestling of this world asketh a fall:
 Here is no home, here is but wilderness—
 Forth, pilgrim, forthë beast, out of thy stall.
 Look up on high, and thankë God for all,
 Weivë¹³ thy lusts, and let thy ghost¹⁴ thee lede,
 And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede."

It is with Chaucer as a poet that we have most to do; and I do protest against an error which some people entertain relative to Chaucer. When speaking of him, they are apt to say that, "considering the circumstances of the age in which he lived, he was a great poet." Now, don't let us make any allowance or

¹ Crowd.

² Truth.

³ Be satisfied with thy wealth.

⁴ Prosperity has ceased.

⁵ Taste.

⁶ Counsel.

⁷ Without doubt.

⁸ Nail.

⁹ Earthen pitcher.

¹⁰ Deem, judge.

¹¹ That which.

¹² Civility, obedience.

¹³ Leave.

¹⁴ Spirit, or inward monitor.

apology of this sort for Chaucer ; don't say of him, as they did in the time of Pope, that considering he was "the morning star," he was a great poet. The fact is, Chaucer was absolutely one of the greatest poets the world ever brought forth ; he was one of the four great English poets ; and he was not merely one of the first of these, but of the universe, and one of the noblest.

Before proceeding next to notice some of the distinctive peculiarities of the ancient poet, I must pause to pay a tribute to the patriotic benefit he conferred upon the English language and the English people ; and in doing so I must advert to the Norman Conquest, and the yoke put upon the bluff, hard-handed, simple Saxons by their cool, chivalrous, gentlemanly invaders. Whilst that yoke was new, and the hand of William was strong, there were two languages spoken in the country—the Saxon and the Norman French. Saxon book-making was interrupted ; but the Saxon spirit remained uncontaminated and untouched : the two rivers ran side by side unmingled. The consequence was that by-and-bye the national life began to revive. Not many years after the Conquest, the Norman gentleman had to learn Saxon ; and, with the resuscitation of the national spirit came the revival of the Saxon literature. Chaucer's lot was a peculiar one. He became a national poet. He was Norman by descent, a courtier by profession, a scholar by acquirement, a favourite with the learned, and the darling of the nobles ; and yet he became the poet of the people. There is so much talk now-a-days about "poets of the people," that it is gratifying to find in what respect this great man was essentially worthy of that denomination. He combined the speech of the Norman gentleman with the Saxon poetry of the people ; he turned himself to the people, and he did more than any other man in history in the admirable task of binding together the classes of the nation. That man does a more beautiful work who joins the hands of classes, than he who, by irate or harsh language, causes them to keep apart. Apart from being a poet, he laid his one white hand in the open, broad, brown palm of the Saxon, and the other in the fair hand of the Norman lady ; he did wed together these people ; and he did choose to write in the great old English tongue ; he was not only England's great poet, but he was England's great patron.

Since his time the question has been settled that the man who writes a great book must write it in the popular speech, in the people's ways and manners. When Chaucer took up the people, he discovered his burgher and his miller, and so made the *Canterbury Tales* such a grand picture of national manners, as that Homer himself might almost "pale his ineffectual fire" before his genius. Homer lived early and sang about the early Greeks; Chaucer lived later, and he took some of the old stories of England for his themes. If we cannot give him the credit of being an inventor, yet he was the sweetest narrator of old popular legends that ever lived. But Chaucer wrote for the people in the language and spirit of a gentleman. In these days it is said you must put on fustian and go down to the people. Chaucer did not do that. His poems, to speak in a common phrase of the present day, had a "run," and he familiarised the Anglo-Norman in England. He himself said, "Let their clerks indite in Latin, for they have propriety of sense and knowledge, and let the French also in their French indite, for it is kindly in their mouths; but let us show our phantasies in such words as we have learned in our dame's tongue." To which I say a loud Amen.

Chaucer was the first author who discovered character, and drew it individually. We often hear it said of a person, "He is a character." This is no ill compliment; for it means that he is original, strong, individual, unmistakable; you cannot take him for anybody else. He is no mere John Jones, but one by himself. Look at Chaucer's works. How thoroughly individual, how truly flesh and blood his people are. There is as much difference between Chaucer and Boccaccio as there is between Homer and Virgil. Homer is grand, truthful, and life-like; Virgil is a delusion, full of magic-lantern slides and shadows. Chaucer is the Homer of England; his characters are so thoroughly real and life-like. He exercised a great influence on the drama, as he was the first of modern writers who thoroughly individualised.

As Shelley said of Shakespeare, it may well be said of Chaucer that he carries the palm over the Greek drama by the introduction of a large and genial humour into his poetry. Chaucer abounds in pathos, but it only serves to lead to his humour; and the flashes of his English humour only serve to show there are slumbrous depths of true feeling and true sympathy beneath. He

was best humoured amongst men. Let him go to a dance, and all the girls wished he would dance with them first. In battle foremost, in retreat the last. In the house of God meek in his humility, great in his piety. Such was Chaucer. Shakespeare embodies the alternate play of passion, pathos, and humour; for in the case of all English humour its tears and laughter are happily intermingled: and all this is eminently displayed by Chaucer. Whilst capable of touching pathos, he had a downright hearty, genial love of fun in him.

Chaucer was the great national poet of olden time, and the best, the fairest, the truest painter of nature. He was the Adam of English poetry, and he walked in the early dew of the Paradise of poesy. He was the Homer of England. He saw things as they were, and wrote them down. He knew life well. If you wanted a courtly pageant, he could depict it; but if you wanted a portrait of a man, Montaigne could not come up to him, nor could Swift equal him. He was the type of all sorts of writers who came after him. As it is said that an overture foreshadows the best part of an opera, his was the solemn overture to English literature.

Chaucer was very unconventional; he was, moreover, frank, and if he told his hearers a dull story he gaped and told them so. It is perfect rest to get away from the laboured strains of Gray, Pope, and company, and lend oneself for a while to the freshness and sweetness of the verse of this early man. It may be said that you cannot read him; but I want to inspire you with faith enough to attempt to crack Chaucer's quaint English. There is not half the difficulty in reading Chaucer that there is in reading French; who then would be unrational enough to waste time over French and whine that Chaucer is difficult? In illustration of this, I will read you an exquisite passage from Chaucer's "Death of Emily," in the original language:

" His beard was well begunnen for to spring;
His voice was as a trumpȝe thundering."

Contrast this with Dryden's reproduction of the same lines:

" Whose voice was heard around
Loud as a trumpet with a silver sound."

As a sample of Chaucer's pre-Raphaelite and truthful delineation

tion of Nature, I will read you an extract from the "The Flower and the Leaf":

“ When that Phœbus his chair of gold on high,
 Had whirled up the starric sky aloft,
 And in the Bull was entred certainly,
 When showers sweet of rain descended soft,
 Causing the ground, felē timis and oft,
 Up for to give many an wholesome air,
 And every plainē was yclothed fair
 With newē green.

Up I rose three hours after twelve,
 About the springing of the gladsome day,
 And on I put my gear and mine array,
 And to a pleasant grove I ’gan to pass,
 Long ere the bright sun uprisen was ;
 In which werē oakēs great, straight as a line,
 Under the which the grass, so fresh of hue,
 Was newly sprung, and an eight foot or nine
 Every tree well from his fellow grew,
 With branches broad laden with leavēs new,
 That springen out against the sunnē shine,
 Some very red, and some a glad light green.

On the sweet grass
 I sat me down, for as for mine intent
 The birdē’s song was more convenient,
 And more pleasant to me by many fold
 Than meat or drink or any other thing ;
 Thereto the herber [grass] was so fresh and cold,
 The wholesome savours eke so comforting
 That (as I deemēd) sith the beginning
 Of the worldē was never seen ere then,
 So pleasant a spot of none earthly man ”*

As I have said before, I place Chaucer amongst the four fine old fathers of English poesy, and I class Chaucer and Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, in one category. He was, in fact, almost the best fruit the old English tree ever grew. Let us take his

* These extracts were missed by the reporter, and are here supplied conjecturally by the editor. But there can be little doubt about the identification, as the reader may satisfy himself when he finds them quoted for the same purpose in Rev. George Gilfillan’s Critical Dissertation.

works in proof of this. His merit is that he was the first poet that drew character individually, well discriminated, and withal correct. In reading the *Canterbury Tales*, the great charm is that one can recognise every one of its people as every-day characters. One knows the features of every individual even to the cut of his nose, and can perceive all that glorious reality of life in them which only a true artist can impart. Chaucer showed Shakespeare how to depict: Shakespeare, it is true, delineated character well, as he did everything well; but Chaucer is the oldest, the truest-hearted, most deep, pathetic, and unconventional poet England ever produced. He was a new man, a first man, a fresh man, an unconventional man. He wrote down things exactly as he saw them, and as they had effect upon him—not what correct people now-a-days would say *ought* to have been the effect. Chaucer was the sincerest poet that ever lived; and it is right pleasant to get away into his hearty, frank, jolly, jovial verses, full as they are of fine old unconventional English words. The man had a wonderful idea of satire; he was a dear lover of nature, and was, moreover, an awful “quiz.” He had all the merits of Montaigne, more than the wit of Swift, and Wordsworth’s love of nature as well. Whether we begin with nature or go on to character, the hand of a master is perceptible.

But he had one great misfortune to contend with—he had the bad luck to be an Englishman. If he had been a delicate Virgil, or a feeble Ennius, people in the present day might have taken the trouble perhaps to read him. But why should we not comprehend old English as well as Greek or French? Chaucer wrote in a language that is fast becoming dead to us who live in these modern times. It is true it is awkward and annoying to be obliged to turn to a dictionary in the middle of a line; but have we not often to do that with Homer? How, I will ask, do Englishmen read Burns? Many do, and do it by study. Why not with a national poet like Chaucer? The excuse that you cannot make out his language ought only to be made use of by lazy people. The proper understanding of the value of words is essential to proper speaking and proper writing; and the best study of primitive English will be found in Chaucer. Why should we mouth over a Roman pot, or go “mooning” to Kenilworth, if we neglect to familiarise ourselves with a curious and beautiful

antiquity like Chaucer's poems? In a word, we ought to be acquainted with the language in which our forefathers talked, with which they rallied in the battle-field, and in which they prayed and worshipped.

To justify the view I have expressed of Chaucer's character and writings, I will give you a series of selected and various quotations from his pages. I give them to you as a few lessons in Chaucerian reading, in the hope of convincing you of its ease and simplicity. However, I will first of all lay down a few simple rules for reading Chaucer with fluency. You must pay particular attention to the plurals and genitives, and the variation of the final syllables. You must be Teutonic in your pronunciation, and if you will call "drops" "droppës," and "streams" "streamës," &c., you will easily manage Chaucer. The language, partly Teutonic and partly Saxon as it is, may in some cases be considered vulgar; but it may be heard in use, by the country folk, in some counties, even in the present day; and it is so beautifully intermixed that each word has its full meaning, whilst the harmony of the lines, —though occasionally short of a foot, perhaps—is quite refreshing and thoroughly English.

In illustrating Chaucer's characteristics, we will commence with his love of nature, and for this we may take his exquisite lines on "The Daisy"; while quotations from the "Canterbury Tales" and "Troilus and Cresseide" will show his mastery in description of incidents in common life, and in delineating individual character. First then, about the daisy:

.
 "And as for me, though that I can but lite,*
 On bookës for to read I me delight,
 And to them give I faith and full credénce,
 And in mine heart have them in reverence
 So heartily, that there is gamë none
 That from my bookës maketh me to gone.
 But it be seldom, on the holy day,
 Save certainly when that the month of May
 Is comen, and I hear the fowlës sing
 And that the flow'rës 'ginnen for to spring,—
 Farë well my book and my devotiön.

Now have I then eke this condition

* Can but lite = know but little.

That, above all the flow'rës in the mead,
 Then love I most those flow'rës white and red
 Such that men callen daisies in our town.
 To them have I so great affectiön,
 As I said erst, when comen is the May,
 That in my bed there daweth me no day
 That I n'am up and walking in the mead,
 To see this flow'r against the sunnë spread.
 When it upriseth early by the morrow,
 That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow,
 So glad am I when that I have presënce
 Of it, to do it all reverence
 As she that is of all flow'rës the flow'r,
 Fulfillëd of all virtue and honóur,
 And ever alikë fair and fresh of hue
 As well in winter as in summer new,
 This love I ever, and shall until I die
 Al* swear I not of this, I will not lie."

These beautiful lines, from the prologue to the Legend of Good Women, may serve to illustrate Chaucer's love of nature.

[Prominent among the qualities of his poetry is the ruggedly picturesque. Short and rapid strokes of the brush are usually more powerful than they are polished: but in Chaucer the ruggedness is compensated by the concentration. He crams into a big bulging line the meaning which, in Spenser, would fill a stanza or a page. In the description of the Temple of Mars, in the Knight's Tale, every line is a picture, and resembles the boss upon a buckler, or the knob on a rough goblet of gold:—

"There stood the temple of Mars Armipotent,
 Wrought all of burnëd† steel, of which th' entry
 Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see;
 The northern light in at the doorë shone,
 For window on the wall ne was there none,
 Through which men mighten any light-discern;
 The door was all of adamant etern."

What figures are carved there! There is

"The smiler with the knife under the cloak;"

* Although.

† Burnished.

and—

“The slayer of himself yet saw I there.
His heartē blood hath bathēd all his hair ;”

and—

“Woodness laughing in his rage :’

and ghostlier still—

“The sow fretting * the child right in the cradle ;
The cook yscalded, for all his long ladle.
Nought was forgot by th’ infortune of Martē,
The carter overridden with his cartē,
Under the wheel full low he lay adown.”

When he follows the humourous style, Chaucer is equally sententious and striking. Thus he says of his Franklin:—

“Withouten bake-meat never was his house,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
It snowēd in his house of meat and drink.”

Of the Miller—

“His beard as any sow or fox was red,
And thereto broad as though it were a spade,
Upon the cop † right of his nose he had
A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs,
Red as the bristles of a sowēs ears.
His mouth widē was as a furnāce.”

And of the Friar—

“Somewhat he lispēd for his wantonness,
To make his English sweet upon his tongue,
And in his harping, when that he had sung,
His eyen twinkled in his head aright
As do the starrēs in a frosty night.”

In this broad yet condensed style of pictorial representation Chaucer resembles Bunyan, as well as in some other qualities of his brawny genius. Bunyan, too, writes like a man of business—deals in direct strokes—puts much into few, and these simple words—has an eye for sly humour as well as for bold allegory—and with comparatively little fancy, has an immense deal of essential imagination. How different at first view the Canterbury

* Devouring.

† Top.

from the Christian Pilgrims—the Friar from Evangelist—The Franklin from Great-heart—the Miller from Christian—the Sompnour from Hopeful—the Manciple from Gaius in his host—the Nun from Mercy—and the Wife of Bath from Christiana! And yet, in one very important point, they are alike; they are no cold abstractions—no stiff, formal, and half-animated figures—they are, both the pious and profane, intensely natural, and bursting at every pore with life.

“Troilus and Cresseide” is a lengthy poem in five books. It tells essentially the same story with the play of Shakespeare bearing the same name, but in a very different spirit. Shakespeare’s great object in his drama is to laugh; and he seems for the nonce to exchange places with its real hero Thersites. Chaucer, on the other hand, extracts the pathos that is in the story, and uses it in his own fine way, “painting the afflicting circumstances slowly and assiduously, and descending exploringly into the caverns of tears.” As a whole, however, the poem is tedious, although fine passages are frequent. One often quoted is that which describes Cresseide’s yielding and acknowledging her love:—

“And as the now abashèd nightingale
That stinteth first when she beinneth sing,
When that she heareth any herdë’s tale,
Or in the hedges any wight stirring,
And after sicker doth her voice outring:
Right so Cresseide, when that her dreadë stent;
Open’d her heart and told him her intent.”

Let us quote, too, a passage in which we find the germ of his coming “comedy”—The Canterbury Tales:—

“Go, little book, go, little tragedy;
There God my Maker yet ere that I die
So send me might to make *some comedy*;
But little book, make thou thee none envy,
But subject ben unto all poesy,
And kiss the steps where as thou seest pace
Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace. *] †

* Statius.

† The paragraphs in brackets are filled in conjecturally, from the source before indicated. Some readers will say that the Editor has taken an unwarrantable liberty: but others will be inclined to pardon him.

In conclusion, the object I have had in view has been to show the completeness and universality of the man, and also to induce you to read him for yourselves, in his own language—for no translation, however good, can do him justice. If you think well of this, you may, in the course of the ensuing winter, form a Chaucer club, and spend an evening now and then together, in reading his works, and not pass a line without thoroughly understanding every word in it.

WILLIAM COWPER.

BORN 1731. DIED 1800. (FROM 4TH OF GEO. II. TO 40TH GEO. III.)

I HAVE this evening to set before you the history of a bruised reed, or, perhaps better still, a broken flower, and to show what wonderful results were brought about by the very bruise that trailed the lovely flower in the dust. Had William Cowper lived in the old Greek days, and had the scale of his life with regard to its incidents been great, he would have formed the subject of one of the tragedies which that wonderful nation produced. But there is a triumph of genius higher than this. Cowper's life ran in obscure places: Berkhamstead, Huntingdon, Olney, Weston, Mundsley, and Dereham are all inconsiderable places, and yet to all of them his connection with them has imparted a glory. Had he lived in the days of Job, his life might have supplied a new chapter in that wondrous questioning of God's ways, and that wonderful protest against God's doings—the *Book* of Job; or had he lived in the days of Christ, men would have said, "Which did sin, this man or his father, that he should be so stricken?" for he was stricken indeed.

Though the greater part of his life was passed in obscurity, pilgrimages were made to his house at Olney, and great sects have fought and struggled over his ruined brain and almost broken heart—the one saying that he was a triumphant example of grace, and the other that he was a most frightful result of fanaticism. With this quarrel I will not deal, except to say that it is a pity the people among whom Cowper lived did not better understand the spirit of him who said, "The bruised reed I will not break, and smoking flax I will not quench." What could wake Mrs Unwin, Lady Austen, or Lady Hesketh into fame, except that they were the friends of the broken, despairing enthusiast, who, nevertheless, wrote poems which no change of fashion will ever dim—poems which have, perhaps, a wider range than those of any other man;

poetry that touches childhood, lays hold on manhood, and reaches the strong man in those times of a strong man's life when his mother's image, his father's teaching, and all the sweet influences of childhood lay a hand upon him; a poet of the fireside, the house, the home: of love, pure, and chaste, and true; a poet of the country; a poet who delivered English verse from the graveclothes of French apery, and bid it come forth and live its own natural manly life.

In these days of universal education, it would be, of course, useless to go deeply into the biography of Cowper; but it should be a great comfort to know that the poet came of respectable people, that he had among his ancestors a chancellor, judges, and lawyers galore. His father was John Cowper, a doctor of divinity and chaplain to King George II., who cannot be blamed if his chaplaincy was of little effect, seeing that his Royal master knew of no "visible church" except that of Harrow-on-the-Hill. His mother, however, came of the good stock of the Donnes, one of whom was that famous poet whose pious and anacreontic verses are singularly combined in one volume, making one of the mysteries of human nature, too deep to go into except amongst an audience few and fitting. She could trace her descent by four distinct lines (priceless privilege!); but her claim to fame rests not upon this, but upon some verses which her son addressed to her, and which placed her for ever among the constellations of famous women.

This man's whole life was a long sadness. He was a man who through life wanted a mother's love, yet, when he was six years old she died, and left him to yearn in later years after the tenderness of which he had known so little and required so much. Naturally delicate, coming into the world the victim of one of those subtle diseases of the blood which the medicine of the time could not detect or give a name to, he must go to school on his mother's death; and to school he went, and was there the subject for a long time of that most hateful of all tyrannies—that of a schoolfellow, one of the most atrocious little wretches and vilest little savages known, who was expelled the school on his conduct becoming known.

At this time there began to crop up in Cowper's mind that wretched superstition which stuck to him through life, a superstition which was nursed and encouraged by his schoolmaster.

At eight years he went to Westminster school, where he must have read very hard, for, having left the school, he read very little afterwards; and yet his poems were marked by a wide knowledge, which he must have gained at this period.

From school he went to his uncle's, in Southampton Buildings, where he was supposed to learn law, in company with Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor, instead of doing which he and his fellow-clerk spent the time in "giggling and making giggle" with his uncle's three fair daughters, one of whom—Theodora—loved him, and with a love which lasted through her life, though her father "forbade the banns," a disaster which the poet, on the other hand, lightly forgot, for he was soon afterwards in love deeply with a lady from the West Indies, whom he could not and did not marry. Thus Cowper lived an idle life, and this, again, was one of the misfortunes which seemed to be his universal lot; for, on looking back from after years, no man can draw comfort from such a life.

About this time he lost one of his best friends, Sir William Russell, and losing him he seemed to give way to despair, and went to live in the Middle Temple in seclusion—perhaps one of the worst things he could have done: for it takes a strong man, and not one of his temperament, to live alone and yet be lively. Located here, despair grew upon him apace, and he came to the settled opinion, which never left him, that he was a doomed, damned man, one who had committed an irreparable sin, and for whom there was no redemption for evermore.

We shall pass over some of the succeeding incidents of the poet's life, bearing always in mind the feeling of despair which ever seemed to settle deeper and deeper upon him. At the age of thirty-two, after his father's death, Cowper was offered by a friend two sinecure offices in the House of Lords, which approaching prosperity drove him to attempt suicide twice. Following up the course of events, he went to live with the Unwins at Huntingdon, and from thence to Olney on the breaking up of the Huntingdon home. The last five years of Cowper's life were passed in perpetual gloom. During those five years he is said never to have smiled. All the superstitions of his ill-education, and all the mania of his defective constitution, gathered over him towards the close; and every morning when he came out of his room he looked at his old Nor-

folk friend, Johnson, to see whether it was Johnson or the devil, and according as he appeared to be the one or the other, Cowper welcomed him with a sweet smile, or dismissed him with a look of anguish and dread. When poor Mary Unwin died, there was nothing to alleviate the anguish that had then reached its full development. The most endearing friendship had subsisted between them, and the devotion of Mrs Unwin to her charge during long years of overwhelming adversity is worthy of all praise. No man who ever lived gathered around him womanly services so constant and faithful as this poor, smitten man. All the people who ever knew him seem to have been a long succession of patient nurses; and the painful part of it was that he seldom was able to give anything for all he required. But some of the deep mysteries of the beautiful side of human life lie in this. His life was a perpetual want; and it is strange that a perpetual want of the human heart is sure to draw out a perpetual supply; for demand and supply are happily not things of the dismal sciences only, but things of the science of sciences—the human heart.

We must now leave him, sleeping his last sleep in Dereham, where Hayley has given him an epitaph,* and he himself gave the world “The Task.” Cowper’s life was unfortunate in every respect. Amongst bad scenery, and bad doctors of divinity, he was trained in superstition, and was full of drivel himself, naturally and artificially. If these things had been changed there

* The monument to him was erected by Lady Hesketh, who was his administratrix. Hayley’s inscription is as follows:—

In memory of
WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.
Born in Hertfordshire, 1731 :
Buried in this Church, 1800.

“ Ye who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, signified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion’s bard, devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper’s dust.
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favourite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection’s praise ;
His highest honours to the heart belong,
His virtues formed the magic of his song.”

might have been another William Cowper ; but who can say that "The Task" would have been written? The man might have been happier, but the poet might not have been so true.

Cowper was beyond doubt the greatest letter-writer that the world has ever seen—the most witty, playful, genial, droll, humorous, and superstitious letter-writer that ever lived. He wrote about Olney, Mary Unwin, the postman, Weston fields and gardens, balloons and flying, mackerel and its boiling. He wrote about William Cowper and *his* little concerns ; and out of that scanty material he contrived to make volumes of letters that will live as long as the world has any taste for simplicity, affection, genuineness, and true poetry, being spent where true poetry had not before been much spent—in ordinary life, and in what fools call the dull routine of daily drudgery. It is a relief to turn from the letters of Gray, Walpole, and Byron to those of Cowper, who gave an account of the whole private life of a handful of people, who seemed to have lived to love one another, who worshipped one another, and who perhaps rather spoiled one another. The wonder is that that dull old Olney and Mary Unwin were so interesting in a little joint-stock society for mutual tickling and admiration. Cowper filled one of the great offices of a letter-writer : he set the ordinary flow of human life before us exactly as it was, calmly and quietly. For length, for variety, and for constant freshness, he was the best of letter-writers ; and there is a womanly beauty about his letters. Women are great letter writers, because their intellectual powers deal in and are very much developed by the affections. When a woman sits down to write a great poem, the greatest stimulus a woman can have is wanting—the affections are not interested ; but when she writes letters her affections are aglow, and hence she excels, because by habit of nature, and by habit of education and life, her intellectual powers dwell in, and are developed by, the affections of her heart. Some men are partly men and partly women in this respect, and Cowper was one of them. It would hardly have been surprising to see him knitting and stitching his own muslin cap. Even his poems were matters of the affections. The sunshine of Lady Austin's face brought "The Task" into life. The sweetest lines he ever wrote were to his Mary. The majority of his poems were offerings on the altar of affection. They were

written to, or for, someone whom he loved. In his letters—when his affections were aglow—he took up the most insignificant thing, as a bit of glass, and held it in the sunshine till it imitated the diamond.

One very great task which Cowper accomplished was to teach men of taste to believe that men of piety are not necessarily dullards and fools, and to teach men of piety that they need not be coarse and vulgar. He took his part in that great work which Samuel Johnson helped to do—and that was to make morality fashionable. He had been in the world long enough to get polished; he went out of it early enough to be pure and unsophisticated. He knew both sides. He was a man of the world, and a man of religion; and he did this country an essential service, which almost all the poets have been better for. Since Cowper's days, the greatest poets have been "on the side of the angels"—men as timorous about wrong-doing as they are glorious in the praise of right. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Tennyson are in a direct line from Cowper. Glorious Robert Burns, who lived at the same time as Cowper, is not to be forgotten; but his breath too often smelled of whiskey. It is a comfort to find a poet so pious as Cowper was, and not a muff.

I have mentioned another great service which this poet rendered to England, and that was to rescue us from the French school of verse, and from "poetic diction," as it is called. I have a great aversion to slang, except in the proper shop for it. Let lawyers and theologians talk jargon among themselves; but poets are bound to clothe beautiful thoughts with beautiful words. "Poetic diction" is inconsistent with the use of such a word as "gun," for instance. "Murderous tube" is the equivalent for this word in the poetic dictionary. What jargon and sham classic Gray wrote:

"The attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the Cuckoo's note."

What trash! What is an "attic warbler"? What is the meaning of "pouring her throat"? There used to be a verb "to sing" in English; but it is out of use. "Responsive to the cuckoo's note!" "Untaught harmony of spring!" I will answer for it that that was written in a garret—it never occurred to any man in

the fields. Then there are "zephyrs," and something about "enchanted shells," oyster shells, perhaps. Then there are the phrases borrowed from the haberdasher's shop, "velvet green," "purple light of love," &c.* I have often wondered about that "purple light." I like the phrase. I wonder what it is: that is why I like it. Here is another line:

"In climes beyond the solar road."*

I have heard of the Holyhead Road, but never of the Solar Road. Why cannot the man say what he means in English, instead of translating it into "poetic diction," like old Samuel Johnson, who translated his phrases into Johnsonese, as when he said, "A dirty fellow leaped out of the bed in which we were to sleep," but afterwards made it, "A man, black as a Cyclops from the forge, emerged," &c. And then there is the classic slang. I hate it. I heartily wish some of the knackers would put Pegasus out the way. The Muses are a set of old frumps, and I heartily wish somebody would pension off the whole "tuneful nine" of them, so that I may never hear of them again. I am weary and sick of Mars, and Jove, and Helicon, and the Ilissus, and the whole collection of stage properties. When I leave these for "The Task," it is like walking out of an evening party into the fresh moonlight, under the glorious stars, and talking about them, not finely, but simply, heartily, plainly, and truly. I regard Latin verse, Greek verse, and piano-strumming as the three-headed Moloch to which England offers up brains and sense. Cowper wrote English poetry in the English language, acting upon the Aristotelian maxim:

"Loftily thinking, lowly speaking,
The words of a people, the thoughts of a sage."

His painting of nature was minute, but entirely transparent. He had the ability to set down exactly what he beheld. Christopher North said that anyone who could describe water beginning to change into ice was a poet. Burns did it:— †

"The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently crusting o'er the glittering stream."

I do not care much for "silver beam." Thomson did it better.

* Gray's Progress of Poesy.

† The Brigs of Ayr.

He was a great painter, but rather in the smudge and vincer style:—

“ An icy gale, half shifting, o’er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mad career,
Arrests the bickering stream, the loosened ice,
Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day,
Rustles no more ; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
A crystal pavement, by the breath of Heaven
Cemented firm, till, seized from shore to shore,
The whole imprisoned river growls below.” *

This will not do for Cowper. The scenes he describes are gentle and tranquil, and the Ouse never growls:—

“ On the flood,
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved, while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.” †

There are three pictures by three poets. He who can add a fourth may account himself a fourth poet, on the authority of Christopher North.

This man, Cowper, so gentle and so retired, was yet able to blow a patriotic blast which was and is heard throughout England.

“ England ! with all thy faults, I love thee still,”

is the creed of Englishmen in all parts of the world, except a few miserable people who dare hardly say, but would, that they love any other country better.

In conclusion, I hope some of you will leave the puzzling poetry of some great living men, or the passionate blare and glare of Byron, to seek the holy shades and the quiet ways, and the pleasant places where Cowper, the witty, wise, godly and true, delighted to walk.

* Thomson’s “Seasons:” *Winter*.

† The Task: Book V.

POPE AND BYRON.

POPE: BORN 1688, DIED 1744. (FROM 3RD JAMES II. TO 17TH GEO. II.)

BYRON: BORN 1788, DIED 1824. (FROM 28TH GEO. III. TO 4TH GEO. IV.)

“FIFTY years ago,” remarked Lord Byron, speaking of Pope’s position and merits as a poet, “Italy neglected Dante, but at present they adore him. Shakespeare and Milton have had their rise, and had their decline.” I am sorry enough to differ with Lord Byron on the matter. Great poets have their ups and downs, but they have no decline. They may be, like the sun, liable to an eclipse; many nobodies may eclipse a bright one for a time. It is with poets, as with private people; not every poet is equally acceptable to us. There are poets we should be sorry to see in a young woman’s hands, and there are poets no young man can possibly understand, he is not old enough, nor sad enough, nor deep enough, nor wise enough. There are all tastes to be pleased. Many people, for instance, admire the poems of Robert Montgomery, and I have heard there are people who believe Mr Tupper to be a poet. There was a day when Byron was more popular than now—not more popular than he will be again. In other days Pope was looked upon as a great poet, but different times, different circumstances, different feelings and tastes make people glad that in Cowper they have something English and wholesome. A few people there are who believe Wordsworth a poet, but very few.

So, I will admit that Alexander Pope had his time of eclipse; nay, there are some who do not believe he was a poet at all. I meet with many now. I wish to show you that he was supreme—one of the greatest we have ever had. One of the most talented, clever, and ingenious books ever written—and putting aside its merits as a translation of Homer, one of the splendidest poems the world has ever seen—is Pope’s “Iliad.” And if ever a friend who has been to college snubs one of you for liking Pope’s

“Iliad,” and says you know nothing of Greek, then admit that you know nothing of Greek or Homer, but say it is *Pope’s* “Iliad” that you like. That book brought its author £5,324, and although it may be said that pounds are a sorry measure of the value of poetry, yet they are pretty true indicators of popularity. The highest men of his age looked upon Pope as supreme. He was admired by Swift, and he had the aversion of Addison, who could not bear that there should be two kings, and found he could not be one if Pope were one.

Pope made his way from obscurity; overcoming disadvantage he became intimate with the great in wealth, in wit, in truth. Look at that man, deformed and long diseased, unable to take his own stockings off, and making up his legs with three pairs of stockings so that people might think he had something to stand upon. Look at him, a woman-nurse with him always. And yet, with all these disadvantages, that man was the supreme man of his age. Those who think of these things, who know what it is to fight against a fickle body, will love the man’s poems.

There is not over much to love him for morally. He was bitter, personal, sensitive, fretful, vindictive, vituperous, parsimonious; always talking about his money—a passion for getting, and not too much willingness to spend it. There was an instance of this, when he had two men to supper, and a single pint of wine for the two. Mr Pope took so many small glasses, then retired to bed, saying, “Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine.” You will remember, too, the severity he indulged in. They always turned against the “Ruthless Little Tyrant,” as Mr Thackeray has called him, when he laid on with so ruthless a hand. He revelled in the description of poverty and the poor—poverty, its meanness, its shifts. It is not a kind friend who holds up one’s coat to show the patch. And yet how Pope does it! With such inimitable skill, and with such savage bitterness, one can hardly keep from hating him. It was Pope who made generations believe that authors and rags, dirt and drink, gin, cobwebs, tripe, and poverty, and duns and bailiffs, squalling children and clamorous matrons, are always associated. It is not all due to Pope, however, for Goldsmith did much more. Pope laughed at it, but Goldsmith practised it.

But we have to settle, as far as we can, the question, “Is Pope a

poet? Is he a great poet? and if so, why so?" And in order to do that, we will consider one or two things that are in the true office of poetry, especially as there has been a great deal of discussion lately whether rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, are poetry, and there is a book written to teach what *is* poetry.

Our human nature, our every thought, and our every emotion, when it reaches a certain point, requires expression. The usual vent is action. When people cannot act, they are obliged to comport themselves as though they meant to do something; they do so by a gesture. Words are the supreme expression of emotion. Poetry is a creative act. The great poet creates an ideal world as God creates in the real, and man is in closest imitation with his Maker when with a sheet of paper, blank or chaotic, he calls up a "Paradise Lost" or a play of "Hamlet." It is the poet's duty to dye everything in the colour of his imagination. The poet's coat, like the coat we read of in the Pentateuch, must be of many colours.

Poetry differs from prose, by what? Some say there is no difference, and there are some of our great prose writers of whom we may say this. There are passages in Jeremy Taylor that are poetry. I don't say it is the *best* poetry, but simply because it lacks the *body* of poetry—rhyme and rhythm, and all those things that differ in a bodily sense from poetry in its essence. These constitute the body, and the more beautiful the body is, the greater the artist, the greater the poet. I am one of those who entirely dissent from the new school, who undervalue rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration. Rhyme is a passion which I believe to be natural; children love it, the savage enjoys it. Dancing also is a natural passion, and no young person need be ashamed of their love for it. Music regulates and restrains the dance, and this is what I require in poetry—a rhyme, an alliteration, a judicious repetition of words of the same sound. And in this sense, there are few men who can regulate the dance better than Alexander Pope. Rhymes are the hooks to hang great thoughts on memory. By virtue of the verse which lives within us, we remember more of poetry we read when children than of solid blocks of prose, because memory, by the rhyme, is restrained and ordered. And the higher a man's emotions are, the more certainly he loves verse. If you look at those marvellous love-letters, when women

go into court to show their broken hearts for a consideration, you will find nearly all the men breaking out into verse. When a man gets to a certain heat, verse seems a necessity to let it off. We find it again as the expression of religious emotion. Fancy trying to praise God with a block of prose! Listen to some men's prayers; they are all prose, and prosy too. There is no emotion in them. "Lord of the love that lifts the lowly into a loving life with Thee." Put this into other words:—"Oh, Lord of that love which exalteth the humble into affectionate communion with Thee." Which is the most beautiful? Why is one more beautiful? Simply because the letter "L" begins so many words, and it is a lovely letter. You may say it is a pitiable trick. Why? If it gives men sweet pleasure, it is a glorious thing.

You need not be ashamed of being fond of alliteration, of rhythm, of rhyme. You need not be ashamed of being fond of Pope or Byron; these two masters sacrifice nothing for these things. Read the third and fourth cantos of "Don Juan," and then tell me Byron suffers from the trammels of the verse. There are people who wish to narrow the field of poetry; who do not care for mere humanity, who want to go to the daisies, who want to worship the mountains. What is the use of the mountain without the man? I maintain that the first thing is man, the second thing man, always man. Nothing is worth anything until connected with man.

Now, no man would put Pope along with Shakespeare, with Byron, or Dryden even; but when we have passed the fixed stars of mighty magnitude, he is a star of infinite brightness. Those are the greatest poets who deal most with man. What is the supreme glory of this earth? It is man's dwelling-place. And yet you run down Pope because he only dealt with man. The great real poet, Chaucer, was intensely human in his verse. And Shakespeare, you do not find him dallying with prettinesses. Homer is beautiful—in a modern sense—only accidentally. Do you think Homer would give up a battle-field to talk about daisies? Now, people say of Pope that he is too Frenchified. If by that you mean that Pope follows that nation to whom the gift is given of making people know what they mean, then Pope is Frenchified. He had an inimitable artistic power of making utterly lucid

everything he wished to make known, seen, and understood. Then he was so artificial, you say. Do you who say so know what it is to be natural? A man and woman in a ball-room may be as much the subject of poetry as the soldier on the battle-field. You say his subjects are trivial; he did not write tragedies. Most of the modern running down of Pope is just this, that as he did not select the highest subjects, he must be put down as an inferior poet. But a poet, like other artists, is ranked for his execution, and not according to his branch of art. It were better for a man to write a song that should live in the heart of the nation, than try to write an oratorio and make a mess of it. Pope knew something, and he wrote about it; he knew that thoroughly, and he wrote it well. He painted the artificial class of society, and he sometimes painted little things, but in them he put sound sense, large observation, gathered wisdom, treasured ethics, and set them to sound epigrammatical couplets, each of which is a quotation, and has got to the tongues of those who have never read his works at all.

Byron had a wider field, a deeper genius; he was a greater man than Pope. Those of you who fail to admire these two great masters are very inexperienced in the world's ways, and the sooner you get into the clear, bracing air of "Don Juan," or the "Rape of the Lock," or the "Essay on Man," the better for you. There are some poets who cannot descend to make us understand what they mean—if they mean anything at all.

It will be obvious that the main points of comparison I intend to institute between Pope and Byron are those which distinguish them as artists and poets rather than as men, though there are one or two singular points of resemblance in their story. Both of them had bodily deformity—which vexes, annoys, and hinders—and both of them had a certain scorn of the world. When Pope ran away from the world, he got into his grotto at Twickenham; when Byron got away from the world, he found it too strait for him, as he had found England too narrow. Of course there is a mighty difference in their range—Pope of humble birth, Byron's pedigree running up to the Norman Conquest, come of a noble race, and proud enough of his lineage he was. Both of their childhoods were, comparatively, unfortunate; the education of both sadly irregular; the reading of both men strangely

discursive, as was the case with Swift, Goldsmith, and Samuel Johnson.

No justice can be done to Byron, and very little mercy can be shown to him, except we take a very tender, very patient, and very merciful look at the singularly evil influences under which that unhappy man was brought up. His father was a blackguard and a bully. He married Byron's mother for the sake of her money, and he had the want of decency to say so. After he had got her money he spent it, and then sponged upon her, borrowed from her, and when he had reduced her to poverty, he taunted her with her poverty and the shallow circumstances that were the result of it, insulted and deserted her and her boy for ever. Strange it is that in time to come the boy should desert *his* wife and child, and see them no more for ever. So much for the father's side. And what is to be said of the mother's? His mother was a woman without judgment, without self-command; a shrieking, howling, red-faced, passionate, self-indulgent person; now spoiling him by her ridiculous indulgences, now subjecting him to her extravagant wrath. A ridiculous person, an absurd person, short and fat. What a sight it was to see her in a rage, running round the room after the lame boy, and he mocking, and dodging, and hopping about! Although that may be droll to hear, it was tragical to suffer from, and there is much mercy to be bestowed on a man whose father was a blackguard and whose mother was a fool. The woman's head was full of nonsenses; there was no superstition too foolish for her; and she was full of fantastic fears, small dreads, petty shrieks, and all the other catalogue of absurdities of which such people are guilty. There was scarcely a gleam of beauty about the young life of the child, except what was given by the faithful Scotch nurses—honest, good souls, who loved him. All too early he became a peer in his own right, and an heir, and that was a bad thing for him. One of the greatest misfortunes that occurred to him was that he ever was a peer at all; for when a man is born to be a rebel, the higher he is the greater rebel he will be. If he had been in a lower rank, he would have been more easily held by the bonds of society, by the cords of custom. As it was, he was free to enjoy every fancy and phantasy, and every whim and riot that his rebellious spirit could possibly dictate to him. At Harrow he was idle, fitful in study, like the great

men I have mentioned; and there he got large doses of Virgil and scholarship, and was set down to grind the gerunds and to study the niceties of language; but he rebelled and declined. Then came his marriage. Sometimes that is redemption for a man. There have been cases where a happy marriage has brought home a prodigal, overcome a penitent, regenerated a sinner, and even saved a soul; but this was to be one of the most unhappy marriages of great men. His wife was an heiress, but only in expectancy, and the first year of their marriage was shadowed with debts and debtors and duns. His wife was prim, irreproachable, pharisaic, self-righteous, prudish, carrying a pair of highly moral scales regulated by the highest authority, in which she put his faults and failings, and perhaps his sins, and everything was weighed. When she reproached him with one sin, a spirit of mischief caused him to confess two more; and that is the worst of prigs and prudes—one is always tempted to anger them in their wrath. These two people were incompatible. There might have been a woman, who, though sinned against, could have seen what might come beyond; who, in mourning what happened, would have prevented it happening again; but that it was not so with this highly-starched and very decorous female is lamentable. There is scarcely any incompatibility that can be suggested which is greater than this incompatibility in this sad man's story. And so by-and-bye they parted, and the little child went with the mother, and the father never saw it again. Here are the elements of a tragedy! The fountain of honour closed, for he could not honour his father; the fountain of obedience closed, for he could not obey his mother; his love affair disastrous, joined to an iceberg and chained to a prude; the little child that might have laid his hand on his father's sinful heart and brought him home through tears to God, never seen by him again. Before I pass from Byron's life, I must protest against the foul scandal perpetrated against his memory. I am afraid it is what that woman told, and it was another woman who published it. Peace be to her, nobody believes it, and the scorn of two nations is the reward of the wife who whispered the shameful lie, and of the she-novelist who reported it. It is an old story vamped up, which has been inquired into earlier, and found to be false. Byron needs no more blackening than he blackened himself; so let that lie rest,

that most detestable scarnal that was ever uttered against any man.

My object to-night is not the biography of Byron, but the marvellous excellencies in his poetry, especially those in which he and Pope are alike. The greatest poets have been lucid, intelligible, and clear, and had nothing in them of that misty, cloudy sentimentalism which marks what are called the metaphysical poets of the time. The great poet won his wreath by simplicity, terseness, clearness, divine melody, perfect art, a mastery of all modes of expression; and he did not pull up short to moralise and twaddle. Over against the sins of the spasmodic school, which some of you admire, I set Pope. Pope, as I have explained, had limits. He lived in a narrow age, and was a narrow man. It is admitted that he was a *bon vivant*, and that he was a bitter and furious person, that his mouth was sometimes foul and ofttimes indecent, his words sometimes unchaste, and his pictures sometimes sickening. Grant all that, but it is possible to join all these sins, and the fog I have spoken of. Pope had his faults, still he was a man of downright good common sense; a pious man at bottom, who believed all this world was ruled to order. And no transcendentalism can be better than that in which he declared all discord to be harmony misunderstood, in which he vindicated the ways of God to man, and showed that in all the tangles of this world there was simplicity and beauty, and that it was not for man to say because he could not see it that order was not visible, or because he could not hear the music that the harmony of God was not audible. Pope's "Essay on Man" is not very deep; but a great deal of it is admirably true, and it is expressed in the clearest, plainest, and lucidest English, adorned with every beauty that art could teach. There is scarcely a line in which the sense is ever sacrificed to the sound; he was such a consummate artist that it is difficult to find anywhere a place in which the rhyme, or rhythm, or metre could be altered to make the expression more clear.

He was a bitter man, of course, and in that the story of his life resembles Byron's. Pope was savage. Perhaps he should not have been, but what a set of dunces he was pestered with, and Pope said the best way to deal with them was like Swift with the flea, to cry, "I kill it, I kill it." Both Pope and Byron wrote

verses early. Pope's were the better of the two, and Byron's early verses are only worth reading now for curiosity. But when the Scotch Reviewers touched Byron, how he flamed out into wrath; and then you find out in a moment what poetry he admired—you can detect Pope when you come to the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." As a dramatist, there is no doubt Byron looked carefully into Shakespeare, and, like a wise man, he knew Shakespeare was too big for him. But in Pope he found a man after his own heart, and him he particularly admired and defended. Reflection was not Byron's forte. Almost all his works were pure inspirations. With Byron there was no warming up of old matter, no renaissance or middle ages (they never will be in the front rank who are the makers of hash and the warmers up of old victuals); but there was this—perfect originality. It is a charm to see a man who has something to say in his own way, who is not always visiting antiquity; one doesn't want everybody to have a passion for old china; I have no patience with artisan poets, who are everlastingly among bric-a-brac. Byron knew just enough of the classics to save himself from being unlike himself. There, of course, he was greater than Pope. Pope was more a derivative man than Byron; but both of them had this great perfection—they said what they had to say in a distinctly natural and original form.

One good thing about Byron is that the types of his women are mostly good. Of course he has some women who are not good, because there *are* two or three of such women in the world, and they are apt to get in the way. The types of the women are loveable, well and subtly drawn, admirably coloured, and they fill up a great gap in old art, which mostly deals with men. In his "Childe Harold," there are some of the wisest things said in the sweetest fashion. He understood that great rule of art, that works should not be called artistic unless there is beauty in them. The artistic good sense of Byron is perfect; you never get any nonsense from him, and there is no affectation in his great poems. He rages sometimes, but he is always plain; and it is to be remembered to his credit, that he never puts his faults, and the consequences of them, forward as grievances. Byron broke the law, "kicked against the pricks," leaped over every restraint, violated every bond, would have his own will; but there is no

sentimentalism about him, and you never find him saying he has been ill-used, and you get no passage of whining or cant from him. Taking "Don Juan," there is a certain sense in which there is a sanctity about the book. Byron sat there in an artificial calm, and traced the gradual rotting, decay, and degradation of a man without law, the slave of his own pleasures, the child of his own desires, the rebel against society. Of course, if you go to "Don Juan" to see what is foul, you will find it, especially if you carry your own foulness with you. In "Don Juan" there is much matchless description, and a laying bare of the human breast; and I will ask you to read it again, in the light of a terrible picture of a great man going down hill. Read it with a tear, as I think you ought to read it, and with an infinite pity that this man died at thirty-six, and died in what looks to you, perhaps, a poor expedition, but which to Byron meant liberty, freedom, and deliverance, for a great nation that had been. There are parts of "Manfred," "Cain," and "Don Juan," in which, instead of a whining sentimentalism against nature, shrieking out against God and holding out his broken heart as something to be pitied, he owns that what he suffers serves him right; that he has left the boundary, broken the law, degraded himself, and has been degraded. That is the look you ought to take of "Don Juan," instead of looking into it for something as foul as yourselves. If you take that view, the book rises into splendour and almost sanctity. It becomes a warning to you, and contains the commandments, written anew, and by a poet who has broken them, and who put them into fluent verses, so that men are charmed into the reading of them.

In conclusion, I have vindicated both Pope and Byron, because they had sound sense, true manhood, and an admirable way of expressing their sense. They were artists in the best sense; for they never gave rough sketches, unfinished works, sloppy beginnings, scratches, enigmas, or puzzles, but they gave true and perfect works. The third and fourth cantos of "Don Juan" are as good workmanship as any poet has turned out yet; they are unsurpassed in flow, scarcely surpassed in subject. These two poets turned out as much admirable work, each in his own way, as any poet—except the unapproachable one—has ever yet done.

CHARLES LAMB.

BORN 1775. DIED 1834. (FROM 15TH GEO. III. TO 4TH WILLIAM IV.)

AMONGST the many ways in which a man may estimate his love or respect for those who are departed, there is one which is a quaint one, and that is, to ask himself for the sake of what man he would like to be a little older in order to have seen and known him in the flesh. There are some men I would not like to have lost a tooth, or gained one gray hair, to have seen. I am quite content that Napoleon Bonaparte died a little after I was born; I would not be a week older in order to have seen *him*. But I do regret that I have never known Coleridge in the flesh. One thing I remember of him, and that is going to hear an oration on Coleridge, by a man on whom his mantle was said to have fallen; and the man was there, but not the mantle. I am happy to have seen Wordsworth, and I pay respect to my own right hand because it has been in the grasp of that immortal, glorious, and holy poet. I think myself the better for the sweet chance that took me to Rydal Mount, to have for a guide round the place—the only proper guide that could be had—Wordsworth himself; and because I have heard that great poet pour forth page after page of his own verses, descriptive of the glorious scenery from which he drew so much of his inspiration. I am proud, too, of having listened to Edward Irving. But if there is one man I would fain have been a little older to have seen, it is Charles Lamb. That man was one of the most heroic of modern times, when rightly understood; one of the gentlest, tenderest, rarest, and most delicate of English humorists, one of the sweetest of writers; but, above all, one who taught heroism in lowly places, who bore poverty for holy reasons, whose life was, upon the whole, one of the noblest of modern date.

Born in 1775 in the Inner Temple, all his early days were cast amongst the quaint places of London. You step out of Fleet Street

into one little gateway ; modern times are gone, and the Church of the Old Templars greets you. Then, on the other side, you step into the gloomy sanctuary of Gray's Inn. Lamb, who was to live more in the eighteenth than the nineteenth century, could not have been born in a better place. Crown Office Row was the place of his birth. His father had three children. The eldest, John, of very little good, was twelve years older than Charles, and Mary ten. The father was clerk to a Mr Samuel Salt. He was a barrister ; a benchler of the Inner Temple ; a very gentle, dull man ; a briefless body, who had plenty of time to walk up and down, and have his portrait drawn in the style Lamb did it. When Charles was seven or eight years old, he went to Christ's Hospital. Just the school for him. The spirit of modern times has thrown it open to the gaze of the Goths ; in old times it was the sanctuary. It was the very place to develop the peculiarities of Lamb's genius. He remained at school from 1782 to 1789.

His name determined his nature. A man's name very often determines his destiny. There are names against which a hero cannot fight ; and there are other names which, to carry up and down in the world, ought to cover a multitude of sins. There are names which make lads the butt of a school, and turn them cynics in old age. The name of Lamb sank down into the gentle soul ; and he said of himself, "No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name." Lamb by name, lamb by nature, was that man. Everything about him helped to shape his nature. The old Temple his birthplace, Christ's Hospital his school, gentle by name (and, as a Shandean, Lamb believed there was great virtue in his name), feeble his body, modest his spirit, stuttering his tongue. It was a gracious stammer, not that which repels, one that interested those who heard it ; just a gentle hesitancy, a sort of getting ready what was to come. It was often, with him, that which lent a piquant charm to some of his sweetest jests. Lamb was the father of many jokes that have gone abroad and owned other parentage. It was little Lamb who, when Mary was walking with him in a churchyard, looked up and said, "Where do the naughty people lie?" Because he read in the churchyard—you know what a churchyard is like—that there slept the patriots ; there the husbands, who never sighed for divorce ;

there the wives, whose whole life was devotion; children, who kept the commandments; people who died, leaving irreparable losses. But where were the devil's own? We are obliged to ask, like Lamb, "Where do the naughty people lie?"

The lad was amiable, gentle, over-sensible, quaintly observant. He had a clear brow, a mild countenance, and eyes not quite the same colour. There is much meaning in this difference between the colour of his eyes. A man sees things in different-coloured ways. Those who have the misfortune of uniformity, why to them there is not so much colour in life, as compared with a man with a blue eye and a dark eye. Such a man has two ways of looking at a thing. He has no need to pick up a piece of coloured glass to make the world look different. When Lamb looked out of one eye, life was all Claude Lorraine; when he glanced out of the other, life was all gloomy. He had clearly two ways of looking at things, and a great deal in his works may be traced to that.* He had a slow and peculiar walk. He was not a boy for sports, nor for the noise of boys. At school they always called him Charles Lamb,—never Lamb,—and he himself was proud of it, holding that there must be something amiable in all men who were lovingly called by their Christian names. When he went home on the gracious half-holidays, he returned to the same quiet Temple. There he was turned into a fair and delicious pasture,—a closet full of good old English books,—where he browsed at will. He had in after life a holy horror of Mrs Trimmer, and the whole school of enlightened writers of feeble moralities for children. He rejoiced that he had read books that were not proper. He exulted that he had conversed in spirit with the grand old English novelists, where he found goodness (not goodiness); strength and robustness, instead of that little feeble kind of child's literature that seems to be the product of a joint-stock effort—a sort of a cross between a consumptive curate and a young woman who knows nothing of the world.

Lamb could not go to college, because the delivery of orations was a necessary preparation, and he stuttered. He first got a clerkship in a South-Sea house, and then, at seventeen years of age, he got a berth in the East India Company's service, in

* Charles Lamb, though no oculist, would have been surprised to learn this.

Leadenhall Street. The very name of the street must have pressed upon him, and was enough to make the work odious and hateful. There he went as a clerk; salary small. Then his father went to live in lodgings at 7 Little Queen Street, Holborn,—one of the dullest streets in creation,—a street to depress a man's soul. Lamb's mother had fallen into sickness, and was bed-ridden. Poor Mary Lamb was tired out with the nursing and needle-work. What a picture of dreariness—the father fast becoming imbecile; the mother totally bed-ridden; the sister tired out; John Lamb at a distance! John, the elder brother, called occasionally, but did not care to call often upon people who were poor, and shabby, and dull, and moping, and melancholy. Mary bore it well; for, of all women in the world, she was one of the most thoroughly devoid of selfishness. His father had a little pension during the life of Mr Salt. An old aunt who had an annuity threw it into the common fund; but even then the fund was small.

Into this melancholy house, this sad family, there then came a calamity which, had it fallen into the hands of one of the old Greek dramatists, Æschylus or Euripides, there might have been framed of it one of those terrible plays of destiny, fate, and doom that would have astonished the world. If it had happened in Judea, men would have flocked around Christ to know “who had sinned, this man or his parents, that such a calamity should have fallen upon their honest poverty?” Insanity was hereditary in the family. Charles himself had a touch of it, and was in an asylum at Hoxton for a short time. His residence there he mentions with sad humour in his works. Poor Mary inherited the malady to a greater extent than Charles, and she had been repeatedly attacked. On the 23rd Sept. 1796, frenzy came upon her, and she took up a knife and chased her little apprentice girl round and round the room; seized the dinner-forks, hurled them wildly about, wounded her father with a fork in the forehead, and finally, mortally stabbed her own mother with a knife. Charles Lamb was there. He snatched away the knife. His poor father was wounded; the aunt lay apparently dead on the floor; the mother stabbed to the heart. And this was the dark cloud that hung for ever over that tender, gentle, and noble soul. The inquest was held: there was a verdict of lunacy, and poor

Mary Lamb had to be shut up for a while for safety. When she recovered, and knew what she had done, she settled down into a calm and serene grief. Her serenity was not indecent or forgetful; it was the wise serenity of a faithful soul and a pure conscience, knowing that what had been done was done in the dark, and would not be condemned by those who looked upon it in the light. With very short intervals she was subject to these attacks. She lived to be eighty-two, and was never long free from the malady.

In one or two of the earlier biographies of Lamb there is no mention of this tragedy. Either the writers did not know of it, or from a wise reticence abstained from mentioning it; for poor Mary out-lived her brother. Or it may have been the silly reticence by which men thought they did their hero service. But whatever the cause of the omission, Charles Lamb's life is unintelligible without that incident—dull, commonplace, and meaningless, until the lurid light of that awful story dawns upon it. Knowing that, the continual flashes of his wit are seen to be an endeavour to escape the gloom around him. The devotion of his life is intelligible; it is plain that he gave up all, in order that he might wait with wondrous love upon his poor sister who had been so good to him. The telling of that story enables us to understand many things in his daily life. His inordinate love of tobacco; and a failing that has been vastly exaggerated, his lifting the glass too frequently to his lips; all these things look different in the light of that life-long sacrifice of love and tenderness to his smitten sister. In the light of this calamity he was a hero, a saint. Hearing of this, it is unnecessary to ask what creed he held, what meeting-house he frequented. He had got so much to do, that he had not much time to prate about religion. He was a Unitarian, and avowed it later in life. He had got so much practical divinity to get done; he had to sell all and follow Christ in nursing that poor sad sister of his. And he did it. He laid down all things in order that she might never miss a faithful arm upon which to lean.

What a plight for a young man of twenty-one to be in, alone; the father quite imbecile; the mother sleeping in her untimely grave. Brother John was pretty comfortable, but he didn't often look in, and when he did he shuddered and went away. There

was the old aunt, with her small income, but it was of very little help. What was the poor lad to do? He had the whole weight of the family upon him, and he gave up even his love, that it might not interfere with his devotion to his sister. There was a girl who hovered about him shadowily, but he gave it up. If he spent an hour pleasantly with a friend without his sister, he was troubled with punctuous visitings on her account. So intensely, heartily, and thoroughly did he become her father, brother, guardian, friend, that he said, "There is something of dishonesty in any of the pleasures I have without her." When she had one of her attacks upon her, he said, "Her rambling is better than the sense and sanity of the world."

Who can read that story without calling to mind Olney? There we see that gracious William Cowper, and that glorious, saintly Mary Unwin, who gave up everything to wait upon him, and nurse his sad soul, and watch him. When we read that story, we began to think that, somehow, woman had the best of it in nursing and watching; but when we get to little Queen Street, Holborn, we find that man can do it too. Charles Lamb gave up all that he might give his love to his sister. The debt of man to Mary Unwin was repaid to woman by the gentle Charles Lamb, and it is pleasant to picture him walking the holy courts of heaven hand in hand with sweet Mary Unwin; for they were of one stock—not of flesh and blood, but of spirit. They were both souls that showed the might of holy human love and pure self-denial, and demonstrated that death and the grave are weak in comparison. Here was William Cowper insane, and Mary Lamb insane; Mary Unwin devoted, and Charles Lamb devoted: let them join their noble hands, for such a glorious quartette never walked the world before or since.

Lamb's father, old and imbecile, became impatient, and the only pleasure he had was in playing cribbage. When Lamb returned home, he had to join him in the game, and if he rose to leave, the old man would say peevishly, "If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all." "That argument," Lamb says, "was never answered." He immediately sat down and recommenced the play. Poor Mary Lamb knew when things were about to go wrong with herself, and told her brother; and then soon after were to be seen the two walking along the streets

together—poor Mary going voluntarily to Hoxton Asylum, and Charles carrying the straight waistcoat. What a spectacle. I can imagine nothing that looks sweeter, nothing that is purer. They were shabby-looking people, and yet there is nothing in the wide world more touching than that young brother, leading his stricken sister to be shut up from the light and from the pleasant haunts of man. Knocking at the door of the Asylum, Charles would say to the attendants, “I’ve brought Mary again;” and in Mary went, and the brother returned to his lonely, lonely house, with none of his courage and faith lost. And all his life long he went back to Hoxton to fetch her out again, and bring her home. When the time came round for Mary to leave the Asylum, Charles was at the door to receive her. How I should like to have seen him then, as he welcomed back his sister, and as she again took the hand of her best lover, her truest friend!

The old man every day grew worse, and he died, and the pension stopped: then the aunt died, and her little contribution stopped. But Lamb loved her, and he had said, indeed, that he was always her favourite, and that she seemed glad to come home to die with him. At this period Lamb’s salary was £100 a year, but fifteen years later it was increased by £20. It is wonderful that he mentioned it. It enabled him to devote more to his beloved sister—she in whom was centred all his love, all his tenderness, all his care, and all his devotion. When bereft of her society, her aid, and co-operation, then began his perplexities. She was, he said, older, better, wiser than he was; therefore he loved her.

Lamb had many noble friends. There was Southey, and there was Jem White. The latter was continually giving treats to chimney-sweepers, and that was possibly one reason why Lamb was such friends with him. To queer people who wanted love he poured his love out; and the divinest love is that which is given to the lowliest and those who want love most. Jem White was a dear friend of his; but he died, and Lamb felt it. However, there was his friend Coleridge. Lamb knew him at the school, and when he went away to Cambridge. With Coleridge Lamb used to go to a little public-house, near to Smithfield. And what do you suppose was the sign? The Royal Arms? No, catch Lamb at “The Royal Arms.” Was it the Queen’s?

Pshaw! He left such places for the degenerate snobs of the present day who have nearly taken down all the old sign-boards, and left nothing rare, nothing racy, nothing rich, nothing English about them in their application to the inn. The new signs make me think they have all stepped out of the Court Calendar. The inn Lamb went to was "The Consultation * and Cat." That was Lamb all over. The Consultation comes down from the oldest times. It makes me think of the old mediæval houses, where the old monks went, and the Father Abbot took refreshments. But that would not do for Lamb; there must be a contrast. By what strange influence did those two names get together. Who consulted the cat? What was the consultation about? Or what cat was it that was consulted? How came the cat to be consulted? Of all the inns in England, that was the only proper inn for Charles Lamb to be in. Can you imagine him meeting Coleridge at the "Royal Hotel"? But there is a fitness about the "Consultation and Cat." There, in a little smoke-parlour, those two marvellous men sat down, smoked their pipes—not cigars; wise men don't meddle with them—and talked and communed together. There Lamb stammered and stuttered, and there Coleridge talked, and talked, and talked so much that on asking Lamb, "Charles, did you ever hear me preach?" he received the reply, "I never heard you do anything else." Afterwards when Coleridge went away to lose himself in German metaphysics, he left the well-remembered note for Lamb—"Poor Lamb, if he wants any knowledge he may apply to me." Lamb did not quite like this, and he wrote that extraordinary letter containing the famous proposition for Coleridge to solve. But Coleridge also died, and the tie of friendship was broken. For fifty years these great souls had dwelt together in perfect unity; and to say that Lamb had been for fifty years Coleridge's friend was enough to hand his name down. Wordsworth was also a friend of Lamb's; Southey was a close friend, and so was Lloyd—Lloyd, a native of Birmingham—whom we must not forget, for he was one of the little band of literary men that has shed some lustre on the not inordinate brilliancy of the literary fame of Birmingham. Hazlitt was his friend; Godwin was his friend—in fact, the great men of the day. I don't mean archbishops and bishops, and the like—chamberlains and big-wigs of that kind—but all the men with

* *Salutation* would spoil the context.

brains, or pretty nearly all, loved Charles Lamb, and were beloved by him.

About this time Lamb thought of turning Quaker. It is wonderful how many great men have had a similar notion. Byron—well, he did not threaten to turn Quaker, but he wished mightily to turn a Quakeress. Wordsworth thought something of the matter. Coleridge would have been a Quaker if he had not attended a meeting. That did for him. It finished him; he got angry. He read, however, with avidity the books published by the Quakers, and many will remember the neat, chubby, little books, bound in grey, that were published by the Quakers.

We have now got to the year 1800, when another misfortune fell upon Lamb. Old Hetty died. Who was old Hetty? Perhaps some of you have never known the luxury of an old servant. They tell me there are no such things. I know better. You will all remember the story of Dr Johnson kneeling by the death-bed of the old Hetty of his day, giving her a pious kiss, and then recording, "We parted firmly, hoping to meet again." And those who know what an old servant is, know what a darkness falls upon a house when the servant dies. Charles was alone at the time; poor Mary was in the asylum, and there was nothing there but the dead body of Hetty. It is little to be wondered at that in the anguish of that time he should give out that one piteous wail—"I am quite sick; I don't know where to look for relief." "I almost wish that Mary was dead." This was the one solitary cry of anguish that brave heart uttered.

We next find him removed to Chapel Street, Pentonville; but we will not trace his wanderings, but look at him again in the Temple. Here he had another touch of love, but it did not sink deep—it was platonic. He became a total abstainer for a short time, "limping painfully after his sister, who had taken to water like a badger." Then there were the famous Wednesday evening parties; and the establishment of the *London Magazine*, to which Lamb, De Quincey, Thomas Hood, the two Hares, Coleridge, and others distinguished in literature contributed. We now find Lamb in possession of a house of his own, removed above that poor voteless wretch—the mere lodger. Then there was his visit to Paris. Whatever took him to Paris I cannot discover, and I have

been at some pains to find out. I think it must have been restlessness.

After he and his sister came back from Paris, the next thing we find him doing is going to Cambridge, where he met the girl who afterwards married Mr Moxon, and to whom, after his poor sister's death, he left the reversion of the £2,000 which he had saved.

After thirty years, Lamb's servitude at the India House was making him very weary. He sat like a nightingale, he said himself, with his breast against a thorn—the desk. "Thirty years," said he, "have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke." He hated the India House, but he did his duty there faithfully and well—of course, according to the standard of the times. It would not do to say that he never wrote letters in the India House, that he never used Indian stationery in order to write epistles to Coleridge, or that he carried his own peculiar pen in his pocket in order to save the nibs of the East India Company. But then there is a standard of all things, and what is understood is not always necessarily right or wrong.

The next notable thing in his life is his only quarrel, and that was with his friend Southey, who wrote a review, in which he endeavoured, as he said, to do Lamb good by fostering or promoting the sale of the famous *Essays of Elia*, but in which he mentioned that they were "defective in sound religious tone." You all know what that means. You may as well charge a man with heresy clean out, as say he is "deficient in soundness." It is a favourite phrase with religious people. "Sound views." How charming! And then they talk about "sound port," and an auctioneer speaks of a "sound estate." You all know that it is more effectual to damn a man with mild pity, than to hit him right out. Southey did worse than this—he attacked some of Lamb's friends, and this he could not stand. Lamb was not to be pitied nor cajoled over from his friends. He loved and honoured Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, and nothing could induce him to say he did not. So he sat down and wrote the only letter of his in which there was much gall—a letter to Southey, defending himself and his religious views, and his friends. If there was a shadow of another quarrel, it was only when he got a little angry with Coleridge, on a different ground altogether.

Then came his deliverance from the India Office. One day, when Lamb was repining in that leaden East India House, with fear and trembling he received an intimation that he was wanted by the Directors in the parlour—a place very similar to what is called the “sweating-room” in a bank. Lamb feared they might be about to dismiss him. But no; they were very gracious, and after a long preamble, he was told that the Board were profoundly grateful for his patient services, and that he would be pensioned upon two-thirds of his salary, which pension, to be quite correct, amounted to £441 per annum. Oh, the delight of Lamb at being thus set free! He immediately broke out into all kinds of lamblike raptures. Poor little man—his stutter was worse than ever. He “stammered out a bow,” he said, and left the office at ten minutes after eight, and went home for ever. Among other things he said, “If I had a little son, I would christen him “Nothing-to-do;” but as he had not, he would leave it to those of his readers who *had* that most desirable ability. Lamb said that there was about his new and free position an incomprehensibility that overwhelmed him—“it was like passing from time into eternity.” And so it must have been. Let some of you who have to grind at your offices from day to day, imagine leaving them, not for a short time, but for ever and ever. Mary awoke every morning with an obscure feeling that some good had happened to them. Lamb gaily and quaintly wrote to a friend. “Would I could sell you some of my leisure!” What a great thought this was, and how characteristic of the man. And then, more lamblike than ever, he says, “Positively the best thing a man can have to do, is nothing, and the next to that, perhaps, good works.” But the enchantment was shortlived. Lamb was not old enough nor stupid enough to do nothing. He had only one chin, and that is fatal to a man doing nothing. His brain was too restless, his life too active to do nothing. It takes a very peculiar man to do nothing well. Most of us have a fine talent for it by fits and starts—but early in life Lamb got restless, and sighed for his melting days.

It was at this period that Lamb picked up a new friend—one of the marvellous men who surrounded him; for it was the glory of this man that he was beloved by every man of genius in England during his lifetime—of course with the exception of the

bishops and other high divines, who could not flutter around a man like Charles Lamb. This new friend whose acquaintance he made, and whose love he won, was that marvellous man, Edward Irving, whose epitaph was written by the greatest man of the present day—Thomas Carlyle—who said of him, “But for Edward Irving, I had never known what communion of man with man means. He was the freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul mine ever came in contact with, the best man I have ever, after trial enough, found in this world, or that I hope to find.” This man became Lamb’s friend; but Lamb had got—not very old, but sufficiently old to pay the penalty of age. A man who lives long, must, by-and-bye, live lonely. A man who climbs the heights of life is like a man who climbs a high mountain; he has much company at the base, much folk half-way up, few towards the top, none scarcely at the summit. Thus he went on walking about, and his leisure began to weigh him down. The streets and the shops, in his frequent walks to London, were always the same dreary sight; but his friends were gone. The very books began to grow stale—for Lamb was no reader of new books. He had no curiosity to read “Waverley”; he did not care for the Latins and Greeks—he never liked foreigners of any kind—but he had a certain range of old English authors among whom he revelled. An enthusiastic traveller once brought him a wonderful collection of acorns from Virgil’s tomb; but Lamb did not care for them. What did he do with them? Why, believing that of all humbugs those were the greatest who went gathering scraps of mortar and bits of dirt from great men’s graves, he sat in his window and pelted the hackney coachmen with them.

Eighteen hundred and thirty came, and then another great man died—poor William Hazlitt (one of the great misunderstood and little-loved men of our time) went down and made little sign. He was a man of strong prejudices, a grand Nonconformist, who cared nothing for society; and society took its little, pitiful revenge upon him by caring nothing for him—not doing much harm to Hazlitt, but infinite injury to society.

Lamb now gave up housekeeping; for his poor sister Mary grew worse and worse, and her fitfulnesses became more frequent. Lamb described the landlord with whom he went to lodge with infinite and characteristic humour, saying, “T. W. is 70 years of

age; he has something under a competence—one joke, and £40 a year, upon which he retires in a green old age. He laughs when he hears a joke, and when (which is much oftener) he does not. He has served the greater parish offices, and I have become greater by being his lodger." What a beautiful picture of parochialism it is that Lamb should gain a greater glory from living with a retired beadle! The village people looked up—not to Charles Lamb, but to the ex-churchwarden's lodger. Lamb said, referring to this part of his life, "We have settled down into lodgers, confiding ravens." Anyone could say the first part of the sentence, but Lamb only the last.

And now that he was in the country, why went he there? It did not suit him, and he pined for the town. "Do not let the lying poets persuade you," he said, "to quit the town. The country is all very well by candle-light, alone with one's books; but daylight and the green fields return, and it is the same country again." He was essentially a Londoner.

In 1833 he removed to a little nearer London, and in 1834 came the great calamity of his life; for in that year Coleridge died—another stroke of the warning bell, and the saddest and solemnest of them all. For fifty years Lamb had lived in communion with that marvellous man, without dissension, without quarrel (of any moment), without estrangement; and when he died there came upon Lamb a great, sad blank. He wandered about the house, now jesting, now weeping over Coleridge's death, but always the same low undertone, "Coleridge is dead; Coleridge is dead." And Lamb knew it was time for him to go too, as it is with every man, when, as time draws on apace, he sees Jacob's wondrous ladder, with lovers and friends ascending, but no angels descending to cheer his lonely life. Lamb understood it; and thinking, doubtless, of these things, he wrote those wondrous lines, the simplest, naturalest, homeliest, and most beautiful of modern English lines, which it were shame to quote—"The Old Familiar Faces."

And now his sister Mary's health became worse and worse, and he again removed to London. Lamb's own light flickered faintly; he suffered, but if he complained, it was with quaint pathos. "I have," he said, "two bedfellows—cough and cramp; we sleep three in a bed." At the end of 1834—it seems but the other day

—he stumbled and fell, and although he was but slightly hurt, erysipelas set in, and he died—this glorious soul, this troubled heart sank to rest.

It is only necessary to give one other word to Mary Lamb. Her affliction increased, the intervals between her fits of insanity became shorter, but she lived thirteen years after her brother's death, provided for in comfort, to the last, by him.

Now a word as to his character, and then another as to his works. One of the most notable things under the first head is that he saved £2,000, notable because few literary men, and especially literary men with incomes as small as Lamb's was, ever saved anything like so much. It is the more remarkable in his case because it will be remembered that this man was impulsive and erratic, sorely tempted by a sensuous body; a man who smacked his lips over roast pig, was nice upon brawn, luxuriant upon tripe, and apostrophised all sorts of drinks. But all through life he kept his expenses within his income. If he wanted to buy a volume of the old dramatists, he wore his coat a month longer; if he must keep his sister he trudged instead of driving. He was a generous giver, and a warm-hearted lender, yet he saved £2,000, and a monument built of these 2,000 pieces would be an honourable one in his case, because every piece was saved by faithful conscientious dutifulness out of poverty, threadbareness, and sadness, extending over thirty-three years of patient, faithful work.

Lamb is a man to be admired for his patience, his persistence, and his much-enduring. He was a sort of modern Ulysses. His adventures did not carry him very far afield, but he knew what it was to be tied to the mast, to hear the Syrens sing; he knew the rocks; he had his Scylla; he, too, had seen Charybdis; and he, too, holding his faithful, steadfast soul through all, steered his barque eventually into the haven of assured peace. Lamb was a man who, of all others, glorified the common-places of life, of which he saw many; he had to put up with the second best, except in company, where he had the choicest, dearest, and best. When I think of the temptations which Lamb had, and how few were his faults, I can but lift up my hands in ineffectual envy, and bestow upon him what, after all, is but halting praise. There never was a man who was better able to attract the sympathy, love, and respect of every ingenuous nature—and to all others he

closed himself. Knaves, rogues, fools, prigs, correct people, varnished people, little genteel people, people with small bundles of moralities, and the people unable to understand the larger righteousness that creates law,—to these he had nothing to say, or, if he had, he had a fine joke at them and passed on. Lamb was a creature all compact of love. He showed that he could fight when his blood was up, by his conduct of the quarrel with Southey, but he loved all men. Charles Lloyd's lines on Lamb are doubly interesting in Birmingham, and describe his character truly—"prudent, mad, sorrowful and glad." He loved the lowly, and had true humanity—not the little philanthropic thing called humanity, but humanity in the sense in which Shakespeare had it, whose great heart was big enough for *Lear's* sorrows, *Macbeth's* cares, *Hamlet's* speculations, *Falstaff's* fun, *Caliban*, and the witches in "Macbeth." Shakespeare's intense humanity enabled him to ascend to the highest, to perch himself upon the loftiest peaks of human feeling, and to come down gently and lovingly to the lowest things, and live with them and love them. Lamb had this humanity: there was nothing too great for him to grasp, nothing too little for him to love. Lamb's humour was marvellously combined with pathos; his fun was the sparkle and ripple and foam of a richly-running river of humanity, pity, and tenderness. He was an intense realist—he did not like schemes, large philanthropics, distant missions; he was fond of relieving a beggar, but did not believe in schemes for putting an end to beggary. This realism, this contentment with life was so strong, that even the offers of a "New Jerusalem" had no charm for him. The word "new" spoiled it. He preferred the *old* Jerusalem. He wrote to Wordsworth, "God help me! I am a Christian, an Englishman, a Londoner, a Templar. When I put off these snug relations, and go to the world to come, I shall be like a crow on the sand." He was afraid of a world where the things he had known should not be. When he returned to London, and found all his friends had gone, he said, "I tried ten days at a sort of a friend's house, but it was large and straggling, and I returned, convinced it was better to get home to my hole in Enfield, and hide myself like a sick cat in a corner." And so the end came.

Well, we have followed the life of Lamb with something of minuteness, because there never was a man whose life and works

were so thoroughly mingled together. The great peculiarity of Lamb's writings is, that whatever his thoughts were, whatever he saw or observed passed through his mind, and came out in his writings very different from what it was when he observed it, saw it, or heard it. Therefore, as he never transmitted any ray of light in the way in which he received it, it was necessary to be more than usually careful in examining the medium through which that light had to pass. We have seen that he was born in the Temple, and educated in Christ's Hospital; that he became a clerk, living in a dreary street, in a sort of genteel poverty, with a father gray and imbecile, and a mother who was bedridden; and then came that terrible tragedy which, not to know, makes it impossible to understand Charles Lamb, or to do him justice, but by which, when we know it, his life is lifted out of the commonplace into the heroic, and he becomes an embodiment of the spirit of all that is chivalric, pious, religious, Christian. We have followed him through his whole life, and that following teaches us the great lesson, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

His writings may be described as the union, in their finest, truest forms, of humour and pathos. These points, with the fine use he made, when necessary, of hyperbole, may be seen in many passages of Lamb's letters and essays. Among the latter, the well-known "Dissertation on Roast Pig," is one of the most perfect examples of the essay in the language. He said everything as no other man could have said it, and never said anything as any other man would have said it. Though time has not sufficed me to deal as I should have liked with the works of Lamb, I hope that the few words I have spoken may be just sufficient to send some of my hearers to renew their study of them, and to make you do more justice to this glorious man than you could possibly have done if you had not known the tragedy of his life, which trampled upon him so heavily, but in such a manner that, like sweet herbs when pressed under foot, he gave out some of the finest fragrance and sweetest odour that ever man yielded to a loving world.

THE POETRY OF WORDSWORTH.

BORN 1770. DIED 1850. (FROM 10TH GEO., III TO 13TH VICTORIA.)

THE subject chosen for the present lecture is one of quiet character, in the course of which I shall not be liable to agitate you with disputed or party questions. I propose to abstract myself from such matters—not shrinking from them in their due place and time ; but confining myself as much as I am able (not loving confinement much in the abstract) to the immediate subject before us.

And first of William Wordsworth himself. He stands, as it appears to me, a remarkable example in an age of mental dissipation, in an age of attempts at universalism, often ending in shallowness—as a fine example of a man devoting himself, during a long life, sedulously and strenuously, to what he believes to be the mission of that life. He believes himself to be a poet, and to that he has kept himself closely ; and though some of us may be inclined to doubt whether a man has a right to abstract himself in scholastic leisure from the business of the world, the results in the few peculiar cases appear to vindicate such a course. If a man can find out that in him is a faculty for some special work, he has a right to pursue that and that only ; and as this principle will give us but a minority of men, we can safely trust to the fruits of their practice to justify them. It has been said by Thomas Carlyle that there is a parallelism between Göethe and Wordsworth in this particular matter, their determined attention to self-culture and their felt vocation. True, at first sight, the great German appears an unloveable and unmoveable character, with scarcely enough of enthusiasm for most men ; that is, measuring enthusiasm by the amount of attention that a man can give to the things of the day. With young men, especially, Schiller is apt to be a greater favourite than Göethe ; but let us remember how Göethe set before himself the culture of his being, the discharge of his appointed duty, there-

by rebuking those who, under the plea of philanthropy, or in the attempt at doing everything for others, neglect self-culture, and showing them that if they would wait, and cultivate the faculties within them, the future fruits would be more really beneficent and beneficial to the world than anything that can come of racing about at the call of every cause and interest of the day.

Wordsworth's beginning was amidst sneers and laughter, contempt and ridicule. The critics of the day would have none of his poetry; they pronounced it drivel and moonshine madness. The man believed otherwise, and he presents one of the finest instances in modern times of a wise disregard of the opinion of others, when that opinion is opposed to deliberate and conscientious conviction,—a disregard which all men who strive to stand before their brethren, not dumb, but speaking, should cultivate from the beginning; for whosoever will suffer himself to be moved by every criticism, jest, sneer, or idle remark, will be like the wave of the sea, tossed to and fro; will become unstable as water, and, therefore, will never excel. This man is one of the finest cases of it. Sustained by an inward law, by the conviction that his theory was right, he could afford to wait until public opinion should roll round to him. He was not going, lackey-like, to dog the heels of public opinion; and, by altering his plan, or adopting popular clap-trap, or yielding to prejudices in any wise or fashion, to run after that approbation which was withheld. He believed he was right; that his theory of poetry was the true theory—true it was to him; and he could bide his time. Sun-like, he remained still, and the world *has* revolved to him, until now he is felt to be the greatest luminary of this our modern poetic world. For, verily, the thinking men admit that he is the primate of all England,—primate in the best sense of the word,—primate of those who have cultured thought, primate of those who by age, character, and venerableness, by having done good service to the common-weal, deserve well thereof. And this change has been brought about by little alteration on his part. It may be true that here and there some half expression, or weak passage of his early poems, has been amended or left out, because deeper experience showed him that they were juvenile errors; but he has made little change besides. In this peculiar course it appears to me that Wordsworth does claim study, attention, and admiration,

by giving to every man a lesson that if he should work by a law from within, upon principles thoughtfully arrived at, then to that course he must hold on, say what men will, or come what may. By way of a literary curiosity, I will read an extract from *The Edinburgh Review*, to show the mode in which it speaks of Wordsworth :—

“This will never do. It bears, no doubt, the stamp of the author’s heart and fancy ; but, unfortunately, not half so visibly as that of his peculiar system. His former poems were intended to recommend that system, and to bespeak favour for it by their individual merit ; but this, we suspect, must be recommended by the system, and can only expect to succeed where it has been previously established. It is longer, weaker, and tamer than any of Mr Wordsworth’s other productions, with less boldness and originality, and less even of that extreme simplicity and lowliness of tone which wavered so prettily in the lyrical ballads, between silliness and pathos. We have imitations of Cowper, and even of Milton, here, engrafted on the natural drawl of the Lakers ; and all diluted into harmony by that profuse and irrepressible wordiness which deluges all the blank verse of this school of poetry, and lubricates and weakens the whole structure of their style.” “A tissue,” it says again, “of moral and devotional ravings, in which innumerable changes are rung upon a few very simple and familiar ideas ; but with such an accompaniment of long words, long sentences, and unwieldy phrases, and such a hubbub of strained raptures and fantastical sublimities, that it is often extremely difficult for the most skilful and attentive student to obtain a glimpse of the author’s meaning, and altogether impossible for an ordinary reader to conjecture what he is about.”

This was the order of criticism upon Wordsworth’s poems, and we naturally ask, what it is in these poems that provoked such hostility. It has been said, and I think with truth, that if the poems had not been accompanied by a theory, and a defence of that theory, they would scarcely have received all this severe criticism ; that the weak lines would have been set aside, and the many beauties of the poetry as a whole would have redeemed it. But Wordsworth propounded a theory,—one that was to effect a revolution in the poetry of the day. This came just after an age of English poetry, when men manufactured verses. Some of you

will remember the art of making verses at school and college, where, by the use of the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, any extent of verses, upon any possible subject, might be manufactured. You know the mode. Having to write about spring, the *Gradus* is taken up, the said word "spring" is looked out, and there follow it sundry lines from Latin poets. By borrowing half a line from Virgil, a quarter of a line from Horace, and putting in a *synonyme*, borrowed from the same book, you eke out a tolerable line, and this is "poetry." Now, to a great extent, English poetry became like this. It was easy to get set epithets for any and every possible occasion. A study of Gray or Darwin, and other poets of the time, would give you just the proper epithet to be applied. If any of you will take the trouble to look through the English poetry of that time, you may draw up from it a dictionary of phrases which would form a cant dictionary of poetry. In the same way (as I have shown on a former occasion *), almost every profession amongst us has its own vocabulary; and I have indicated how the journalists have their cant phraseology; how, if a man is burnt to death, he "falls a prey to the devouring element"; if drowned, he "meets a watery grave"; or if he is hung, he is "launched into eternity." And so they run on, ringing their little changes, these being the stock phrases which come in apt to the occasion, and, like symbols, stand for things not expressed, and oftentimes not understood. So almost all religious sects have their peculiar vocabulary too; and if the veriest barn used for public worship is to be enlarged, a man with a grave face tells you they are about to "lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes,"—that being the orthodox mode of expression. This may also be done with poetry. Take the word "sun" for instance; open the page in our dictionary, and you find it is "the golden fire of reddening Phœbus"; the song of birds is "amorous descant"; grass is "green attire"; the produce of the earth, corn and such like, is "the earth's wonted tribute," and so on; "Attic warblers," "Nature striking the lyre," "new-born flocks in rustic dance, frisking blythe their feeble feet." And so, instead of natural and forcible words, we have this feeble, semi-classic, semi-barbaric slang. So when a man prays, he never uses the word "wife"; it is always "partner in life," "yoke-fellow," or "help-

* See the Lecture on Cowper.

meet,"—anything but the good, simple, English word, "wife." Or, when a man is gone abroad, he is never prayed for that he may be preserved "upon the sea," but "upon the mighty waters," or "the great deep." When these things are used genuinely, when they bubble up from fresh feeling, who can object to that? But when feeling deserts them, and, like ready-made garments, they can either cover a skeleton or a living body, we must begin to object to them. Nor were these faults confined to poetry. Artificialness and finery were the characteristics of almost every phase of life in those times; and as the French revolution came, and revolutionised dress, and thinking, and manners, and government, so there came poets who revolutionised as strongly, and at first as obnoxiously, the whole of this strange artificial dress of metaphor and simile, mis-called poetry. Such was Wordsworth. He was one of these great revolutionists, though by no means the first. Cowper had done it in his measure, and Burns had also done it—discarding, to a great extent, this borrowed finery, and talking poetical thoughts in good, simple, plain language.

But think how such a revolution would look to one of the critics of the time? I remember once seeing at a railway station a party of men, one of whom had got sundry stripes of red cloth on his dress, and seemed to think himself the largest man of the party; and another was a young man. In the course of their conversation, there came to this young man a woman, plain in appearance and but shabbily attired. She saluted the young man, being to all appearance his mother, and he leaving the town for a distance, and the others with him being his companions also taking leave of him. On seeing the woman, there came from Red-stripe and his fellows, one of those wicked winks and low malicious sneers, with which a veritable vulgarian treats the exhibition of any true, original, holy, and native feeling of the human heart. But to the young man's honour, not being yet corrupted to the extent that they were, he turned to this lowly-looking woman, as to one who had just claims upon him, and as one who, having risen himself, was not ashamed of the lower round of the ladder by which he had climbed. He did not desire to kick it from him, that fools might think he had reached by a single bound the elevation which had cost him many long and laborious hours to arrive at. Those winking folks remind me of the critics of

Wordsworth's poetry. His rustics, beggars, leech-gatherers, &c., were *mauvais ton*; they ought not to come into good society. And the Edinburgh Reviewer winked, and looked as if he wondered how a poet ever could be found in such low and vulgar company. In order to gain some idea of the horror with which his earlier poetical productions were regarded, we have but to analyse our own feelings when some one comes into our presence in a dress decidedly out of the mode. Unless the fashion is set by some great one who has a right to do it, we feel ourselves bound to show dislike to any such attempts to intrude upon what is orthodox and proper in the imperial domain of fashion and propriety. Now Wordsworth did so offend against the fashion. Poetry was duly tinselled and tricked out with its metaphors, to be dressed *à la mode*. In the hands of Pope and others poetry had forsaken nature and become artificial—even its speech betrayed it. Wordsworth came among them shorn of the fair-lined silver "properties" of the time, cut down to an antique simplicity of costume—the flowing robes of state and ceremony were not there; the train was missing, the train-bearer was not in attendance; the whole looked poverty-stricken and bare. Under this poverty-strickenness and bareness, the sharp-sighted for heresy, the lynx-eyed for a dangerous tendency, saw deep and deadly designs, revolutionary principles, and republican doctrine. The critics at once condemned this man as a driveller, as a semi-idiot, as one who was not to be endured, and whose attempts at poetry were to be ruthlessly laughed down. Happily the man was not moved; he held on his way rejoicing, confident that he was right.

Now this confidence should make us look deeply into its cause, for in either of two cases it is a strange phenomenon. Either the man had a theory which was true, and its truth bore him up, or he had a theory which he believed to be true. It is worth our study, if the thing was true, to ascertain the truth; and if he only fancied it was true, to see how such a man could possibly fancy it to be true.

Probably most of you are acquainted with the preface which lays down the principles of Wordsworth's poetry. In the criticism of Wordsworth, as of most other books, *style* is the great matter. If any one wants to write a critique on a man's works, he must not trouble himself much about his *thoughts*. No, no; go to

style! The great matter is the length of his words, the place of his commas, whether he uses colons or semi-colons! Never mind whether he thinks or not, if there are words,—good and proper Addisonian or Johnsonian words. The first outcry against Wordsworth was against his language, provoked, no doubt, by himself, because a large part of his theory was a theory of poetic language. He pointed out that what was called “poetic diction,” which would be found plentifully illustrated in the poems of Gray, Darwin, and others of that school, was to be forsaken, and a selection was to be made of the real language used by men in real life. Much criticism on Wordsworth’s language would never have arisen if there had been a truer idea of the difference between poetry and prose: that properly they are not antitheses one to another. So far has error on this point gone, that if we open a book and see that the printing only occupies part of the page, like a stream meandering down the middle, it is called “poetry.” If it is a multiplication table set to rhyme for the benefit of infant school children, to be duly chanted by them, it is called “poetry.” Never mind the thoughts. Hence we are deluged with trash under the name of poetry, which would not be so if the proper antithesis was understood, that the distinction between prose and poetry is not a mere *formal* one, but a distinction between mere fact or science, and truth clothed by feeling and imagination; between what Bacon calls the *lumen siccum*, and this *lumen* coloured by passion, emotion, feeling. For it is denied that anything is poetry which is not in thought poetic; and if we will acknowledge that some of our greatest living and past poets are prose writers, then much of this discussion concerning Wordsworth’s poetry need never have arisen. When men make this wide and artificial distinction between prose and poetry, the next stage is to appropriate a particular language to poetry in the same way as, with any art or science, we appropriate to it in course of time a technical dialect. There are cases in which these technical dialects are of exceeding value. Every trade should have its own, because it is unwise to adopt a circumlocution when a few short expressive words will explain the whole. But when it is not a trade, not the affair of a mere section or clique, but of humanity, we should always beware of adopting a technical dialect. Wordsworth maintained that poetic thought

was to be expressed in the ordinary language of man ; and, in so doing, he was supported and backed by the greatest of poets. He instanced himself Chaucer, the most beautiful parts of whose works were those which would appeal to all, and which were written in such simple words that we could understand them to this day without dictionary or glossary. Throughout almost all our great poets, the grandest thoughts are in simple and plain words. There are but few passages of Shakespeare, and those few not of the highest import, that are not expressed in the plain and simple words of ordinary life. Still, to advocate this as a theory was another matter, and it was the theory that was the most attacked—the poems, as illustrations of the theory, coming in for the dislike and abuse of the theory.

Now, which is the right in this question? Do men, under the influence of strong passion, use the dialect which I have illustrated from the works of Gray [p. 223]? This is a kind of mosaic borrowed from other lands and times; expressive and beautiful when it first arises into being, at the beck and summons of original feeling and passion, but artificial, strained, and non-natural when it is merely borrowed and tacked on to feelings, instead of being, as it were, born, called for, and instituted by their presence. In the common mode, the thought is sacrificed to the words. Look at the couplets of Pope, for instance, in which there is a sort of necessity that the voice should rise just half way through the line; a sort of see-saw, the middle of the line serving as a pivot. All this Wordsworth set aside. He took plain and simple words, advocating that a selection should be made by which words of local and temporary interest, words essentially vulgar, should be left out, and that the words chosen should be those ordinarily used by men. It would be foolish, Wordsworthian fanaticism, to assert that there cannot be found in his poems a single line in which he carried it to an extreme. The tendency of the human mind is, when we are in opposition, to go as far as possible, mentally see-saw. We have just been down, and the next thing is to go up as far as we possibly can; and perhaps Wordsworth may have gone too far. He has himself proved this; because a comparison of his first editions with the later ones will show emendations and alterations of this nature,—the substitution of words more authorised for those pre-

viously used. If so, this shows that at first the poet over strained his theory, rode his hobby too furiously and too long.

But, leaving style, I will come to the serious and grave charges made against Wordsworth's choice of characters. The *Edinburgh Review* tells us of Wordsworth setting leech-gatherers upon "the everlasting hills," and the impropriety of making noble sentiments come out of the mouths of pedlars; and he was abused as much for this, almost, as for the simplicity and boldness of his style. Here, again, it is possible to overdo. If a man makes a theory by which simple emotion, passion, and feeling are *only* to be found with the poor, he errs, because rank and fashion often-times ill conceal a deeply feeling heart; and it is the fanaticism of liberalism to see no beauty, worth, manly feeling, no true piety about a man, because he happens to be associated with rank and state. But if I were asked upon which side the deepest feelings of humanity are usually found in the greatest purity, and where to find some of the best exhibitions of the holiest feelings of human nature, I might in truth say, "with the poor," for it cannot be doubted that the tendency of fashion, and the observance of custom, is to shame men out of the holiness of original feeling, and make them borrow rules from the code-book of Almack's, or the science of Rochefoucauld or Chesterfield, whose maxims often smother the simple hearty feelings of their original nature. For it is at our peril that we put down a spontaneous hearty feeling at the bidding of a man-made law. If a man be right-minded, well cultured, truly a devoted and pious soul, his safety is in obeying an inward law. The perfection of a character, it appears to me, will be the safety with which a man can obey his first thoughts, feelings, impulses, and emotions. I must not be misunderstood, however. I do not say it is safe to obey our impulses, or that our first thoughts are always to be trusted. I only say what an ideal man would be; that if we were true and natural, *then* it would be safe to trust to first impulses and emotions. Not unfrequently it is safer to do this than to go to the cold and worldly codes of trade and fashion to borrow our laws; for it is but to look round on social life, and see how the fear of man works upon us: how we dare not go *there*, and durst not be seen walking in the streets with *that* man; how we must not shake hands with the other man, because he would not pass muster in such a coterie. We must, if we follow

the rules of worldly politeness, forget any humble relatives we may have the misfortune to be connected with. If our own father himself happens to be a poor plain man, should he come near us in the street, it would be well-bred to become suddenly smitten with the inscription on some sign-board over a shop door, or to have a sudden business down the left-hand turning, and give him "the cut" direct, rather than endanger our gentility, respectability, *bon ton*, fashion, or whatever other name we may use under which to cloak this strangling of the best feelings of the human heart. I am willing to give the true worth to manners and customs, but we must feel that in this age we sacrifice too much at their altars; that we are not manly enough, because we are over-fashionable; that the fear of man, which always was a snare, and always will be, does much to take true feeling out of us; to make us apes of fashion, and the mere slaves of conventional rules. These rules and laws seldom quite crush the heart, but still it is their tendency; and therefore it is, that among the poor, or those least amenable to Almackian codes, we must look for primitive feeling, original sentiment, true, hearty emotions, in the purest and most unadulterated state. The poetry current at the time when Wordsworth came, had forgotten this. It was a poetry which had forgotten the reverence due to man as man. It received a strong rebuke from the bard of Scotland when he taught that

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
A man's a man for a' that."

But this sentiment had not yet made that progress necessary to bring about the better time in which we live, when by degrees we are reducing the undue estimation of the mere outward stamp, and asking questions as to the metal itself. Wordsworth laid down in his theory, that among the poor and rustic, the original emotions were best to be found; that, associated as they were with the great forms of nature, they were the best study for the poet; that the language of these men was the most homely and heart-felt, in consequence of their being the exponents of these original emotions in the unadulterated state, and of being associated with the great and everlasting forms of nature.

Now, if this be pushed over-much, it goes into an error on the opposite side. If we say it is only among the poor that original

emotions are to be found, then shall we have the vulgar cant of the democratic pothouse, instead of the true philosophical declamation of a watcher of human nature. For if a man denies that there can be any heart in the life of the rich, he is a fanatic on the side of the poor. If, on the other hand, he denies that there can be anything delicate, reverential, or noble in the poor, he is a fanatic on the side of fashion and rank. It does not seem to me that Wordsworth over-strained the matter. He never denied the presence of right emotion and passion in the rich and cultivated. He merely stated that his object was, in his poems, to illustrate the connection between our ideas and feelings while subject to emotion ; and that he found the states of simple emotion best exhibited among the poor and the rustic.

Here, then, was his theory ; if it were to be made the unique and only theory of poetry, it would be faulty, because of its partialness. He was suspected of making it the only one, and of saying that men were not to seek for examples or heroes anywhere but among the poor. This he did not do. He saw that the tendency of the poetry preceding him was to the worship of the gaudy, the fashionable, and the grand, at the expense of the simple, the lowly, and the humble. He sought to raise up the lowly and the humble to their proper place, and to teach men, that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise." Herein, as it appears to me, Wordsworth stands one of the best exponents of that peculiar feature of the Christian faith—a faith originally preached to the poor, that sought its first heralds in the poor—a faith whose Master laid it down as one of the criterions of his being the Christ that "the poor have the gospel preached unto them ;" one whose dwelling was with the poor, whose sympathy was with the poor, and the whole of whose teachings are calculated to bring out from the poor whatsoever of indwelling nobleness and truth may be in them. The poet has done this, and therein has been a preacher not in vain. He has shown us that there may exist, under forms of poverty, as high wisdom as ever came forth from the lips of the sage ; not making a confusion between knowledge and wisdom ; not making the poor peasant discuss scientifically upon matters of knowledge, but discourse devoutly upon matters of wisdom—for many a man who has little knowledge has much wisdom. The

truly wise are not always to be sought in high places ; not where there is purple and soft raiment, not in kings' palaces, but oftentimes in the desert, beneath the garment of camel's hair, and subsisting upon such fare as locusts and wild honey. It would not, I think, present much difficulty to trace many peculiar features of the times in which we live up to the poetry of Wordsworth, as one amongst many originating causes ; for sure, bad enough as we are, we have improved. We are less regardful of the mere external circumstances of a man, and more and more regardful of the inner life ; we are less worshippers of rank than we used to be ; there is more real manliness amongst us than there was ; more treating of man as man, and not as man and something else ; more looking at the primary, common, essential elements in us, rather than at the circumstantial and accidental clothing in which we may happen to appear. This feeling, a righteous feeling, has gained much influence from these very poems. By drawing lessons of wisdom and instruction from the poor ; by showing that amongst the poor there often dwell noble souls ; by putting into the lips of men, externally mean, sentences and sentiments of wisdom ; this great poet has done much to overthrow the mere vulgar respect for rank, which inquires not often whether that rank be sustained and supported by true nobility, true goodness, and righteousness of life. Herein, then, must all honour him ; and let no talk about his conservatism, let no idle babble about his change of opinions, no such terms as "renegade" and "turncoat" applied to this man, blind you to the fact that he is one of the greatest teachers of the true doctrine, that circumstances are subordinate to spirit ; that it is not the accidental whereabouts of the man, his geography, trade, clothing, or profession, that make the man, but what is within him ; what of energy, force, and power he has, and can direct towards the pursuit of the high and noble ends of life. It is easy to speak against such a man as Wordsworth, with reference to his changes of opinion ; but remember it is given to but few old men to lead or breast the tide of opinion to the last. It is only here and there that an old man appears young to his dying day. It is seldom enough that men remember the advice of Lord Bacon, that old men should associate and consort much with young ones, in order that they may be kept abreast of the opinion of the time. There

is this peculiarity about Wordsworth, that he has always been in opposition. In the days when liberal opinions were unfashionable, Wordsworth was a liberal. When the preservation of things as they were was held as a strict bond by many of the best men, his was the hand to loose it; and who shall say that that wise intellect does not now deem that the time is come when these bonds have been loosed too much, and that we have lost strength in becoming too liberal? He may see it necessary now to rein in. Such has been the history of many a mind. Added to this, there is also the feeling of disappointment which he has so well expressed at the course of the French Revolution, which blazed up to the young spirits of the last century, so full of hope and promise. Most of you know what the crushing of early hopes is for a man; what a tendency it has to make him bitter and sour, and to make him apostatise, as it were, from some of his better thinking and higher aspirations; how, when a great hope goes out, and dies in darkness, man is apt to lose sight of many of those stars which at first gave him light. There may be many reasons, accounting for the changes that have come over the mind of the poet. At any rate, it never can appear to me right, that the major services of a man, what he did in the full bloom of his strength, should, through any change of opinion, be obliterated and forgotten. For my own part, I would never suffer the early struggles of Henry Brougham, on behalf of popular education and the rights of man, to be sneered out or laughed out by any criticisms upon the strange vagaries of his later life. Though one may allow a hearty laugh at any man, provided there is no malice and spleen in it, we may not laugh at a long life devoted to the people's cause, and to the advancement of man. Neither, in the case of Wordsworth, should any opinion which people may feel themselves called upon to pass upon his recent poetry, his ecclesiastical sonnets, or upon his political manifestations in parish politics, cause us to forget that he has been one of the noblest sons of liberty. Some of the most trumpet-tongued declarations in favour of freedom have come from his pen. There they stand among his sonnets, the noblest that ever were written, in words the most soul-stirring, in thought the most free and liberal, that man ever uttered; and I will say, let no cant terms of "renegade," or "conservative," make us forget the high purpose to which his works are devoted, and those great ends and aims which he has so much served.

There is one epithet which, I think, should be applied peculiarly to Wordsworth, and that is "high-minded"—not, of course, in the sense in which the word is reprobated in Scripture, when we are told not to be lofty, proud, or above our neighbours; but in the sense in which we say a man is of high principle, lofty-minded. In such a sense the word should be used in speaking of any man who, whether in writing, in the development of art, in daily conduct, in trade, in morals, or in religion, is in the habit of constantly referring his actions and deeds up to some acknowledged principles,—for that is the proper meaning of a high-souled, high-principled, high-minded man; a man who has some great principles, which he believes with all his might to be true, and by which he is constantly in the habit of testing his daily work. Such is the case with the greatest of artists; they have some high principles, both as to their aim and the mode of fulfilling it, to which they keep referring all their works. Such is the case with some of the greatest musicians. Beethoven was a high-souled musician, a man who had lofty principles of musical art, high views as to what music should do for man; not looking upon it as a mere entertainment, a pastime, but as one of the true modes of cultivating the spirit, of lapping it in Elysium, that it might become strong through the temperature, and inhaling the pure ambrosial air. This high-mindedness in literature will often be found in some of our earlier writers, in some of our great divines, in whom there is a continual recognition of deep principles, saving them from any mere catering to the peculiar tastes or vanities of the day in which they lived. This is the rule for the action of everyone that strives to do his duty manfully and faithfully; he must have his code of principles,—not to be thrust into his neighbour's face authoritatively and damnatorily if *he* does not hold them too, but to be kept in the inmost sanctuary of his soul for daily reference,—that every day's action may be brought up to it, tried by it, condemned by it if found wanting. By this only can a man's life be high and noble; for whosoever has no such code or set of principles for himself, will be like a leaf on the breeze, driven now east, now west, in accordance with whatever way public favour or popular prejudice may happen to set in. A low-minded man is a man with no such principles, who works from a rule supplied from without, or from the lower part of his

nature. Hence, how many politicians of past ages, demagogues, mere flatterers of public opinion, present this melancholy spectacle. They have no high principles to guide them; no great inward law, written upon the heart, to try their actions by. The people will this to-day, and *they* will it too; and on the morrow the people change their opinion, and *they* change with them. The people learn to condemn such men at last. The man who is whatsoever you will have him,—the chameleon-man who takes his colour from the things that surround him,—is always in the end condemned. Such men are the unstable and wavering. Such a man was never William Wordsworth. He presents to our contemplation one of the finest illustrations of a man of high principle. He had a code of peculiar principles, which are laid down in his Preface. These he believed in his soul to be true. Up to them he continually brought his works, and tried them, and from them he wavered not. Therefore was his poetry high-minded, full of lofty purpose, obedient to a design that can always be seen, and that design not suffered to be interfered with, but propounded as a standard by which to try himself. And so, we should suppose, the life of the man and his present opinions are tried too. It is not for us to say that he is not now true to his standard. The standard may differ from ours; but let the great question be with us, not to blame one another so much for the principles we hold, as for the departures of each from his own principles; for though it is of the utmost importance that a man should have right principles, a little self-consciousness and stern watching of ourselves will show that in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, the faults and sins we commit are in violation of some of our own acknowledged principles. This is true, not in matters of literature and art only, but in matters of morals, of daily conduct, and of religious or irreligious life.

In connection with this, you must be aware that Wordsworth is pre-eminently pure-minded. How many a page of our poets, or how many a line, must a truly pure-minded man wish removed; but who ever dreamed of presenting to the public an expurgated edition or a family edition of Wordsworth? Not that I advocate such things; not that I deem that much good is done by asterisks in the middle of a page, telling where the mischief is, and where to seek it,—for this is the effect of expurgated editions.

What are those rows of asterisks but saying, "Here you will find something naughty, if you will but go and look at the right place," and all know how much of that primitive curiosity to know what is naughty dwells in all of us. Many a man whose purity of mind would have passed over the asterisked passage in safety, is, by this advertisement, both induced and enabled to find the naughtiness therein. This is a lesson that few learn. Brand a man or his doctrines with a naughty name, and then people go expecting to find evil, and keenly watch for it. Consequently, these well-meaning dunces do their best to spread the very things they profess to regard as the most obnoxious poison. Still, the remark that no man dreams of an expurgated Wordsworth shows the absence of passages which even the most fastidious could think impure. It has been well said, that what the Sabbath is to the other six days of the week, so poetry should be to the rest of literature. I believe it, and would say that the law holds good of poetry—"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." If poetry be the Sabbath of literature, have our poets kept it holy? Is it not in many of them a Saturnalia of devilry, licentiousness, and debauchery, rather than pure-mindedness, and that which thinketh no evil, and will bear no stain? How many of our poets have consecrated their talents to the service of licentiousness and shame! How often has poetry been the *vinum dæmonum*, which the philosopher of old would have banished from his divine republic. But this is not the case with the book before us. The purest saint might read it thoroughly without the faintest blushing; the most trebly-refined and saintly man could find nothing over which to show his own super-eminent highness. These books are pure; there is nothing in them to blush at, or to make any ashamed. And this does not come of mere negation. There are some people who are proper, simply because they cannot help it; mere bundles of negations; virtuous, because they are never tempted; and right, because they never get the chance of doing wrong. This is not properly virtue,—the quality of the man, the true manly thing; *that* only comes of struggle and temptation. True virtue is born where the opportunity of doing wrong is resisted. Virtue, according to the true etymon, is the property or quality of the manly soul; and manly souls are not made in cloisters, hot-houses, or glass cases, in which they are carefully

kept from harm, dust, and soil; but in the midst of temptation and trial, and difficulty, and discipline, and work. Wordsworth's purity is not that of negation; not that which has been saved only by having no chance of being lost.

II.

The next point to which I will direct your attention, with respect to the works of Wordsworth, is his theory, or rather his practice, with regard to Nature. I confess there is extreme difficulty in settling how much Nature teaches the mind, or how much the mind puts upon Nature. It would be difficult exactly to settle what Nature does for a man. Some seem to expect that what we call Natural Religion, the teachings of Nature, should come in the shape of a sort of proposition, and because when they go out into the moods of Nature they do not come home possessed with some good set sentiment, as, "To be good is to be happy;" because they do not see sermons actually engraved in letters upon stones, and words upon leaves, they assert Nature can do nothing. Granted, that for some people it can do nothing. Take, for instance, the man who stood opposite Ben Lomond and declared that it was a "well got up thing." His little upholstery ideas he carried forth into Nature, and put them thereupon; Nature could do naught for *him*. We will admit that to do anything here, there must be attuning of the spirit to learn from Nature. Nature, like the sun, will make a portrait only when the substance to receive the impression has been duly prepared. Chemistry must make the plate ready, that the impression may be effected in the sun picture; and so with mental chemistry,—the mind must be prepared before the sunlight of Nature will write the teachings of Nature thereupon. Men go to Nature with an unprepared mind, and Nature's teachings fall dead and flat upon them; but the poet goes forth prepared to be taught by Nature, and, consequently, it teaches him, not a set of axioms and propositions, but a state of being, what is sometimes called a "frame" or a "feeling;" for the office of Nature is not so much to lay down propositions as to bring over us states of being.

By-and-bye, I shall show this at greater length; and the importance that wise men ought to put upon *being*, upon the state

of the mind, upon the state of our spiritual health and atmosphere, upon those feelings of the mind which may be said to transcend knowledge ; similar to that peace of which it is so beautifully said, that it "passeth understanding:"—"the peace of God that passeth understanding." It is not a thing of possession ; it does not come by fingering ; but it comes over a man, like the stillness of a summer eve, like the gladness of a clear, bright frosty morning. It is not had for the asking. It is not had when we are pursuing it, but when we are doing something else. This peace—and by this peace I will illustrate generally what Nature can do for a man—is not sought directly, but must come, like health, indirectly. Take the case of the valetudinarian, the health-seeker by profession, who has got the doctor's fingers always upon his pulse—the man who is everlastingly with his little scales and balances weighing out the proper quantity of food, and regulating with his little graduated glass how much drink he should take ; the man whose whole talk is about health-seeking. Compare him with the man working in the fields, who never troubles his head about his health, having no indigestion, and knowing nothing about his "system." The man seeking for health seldom gets it. The valetudinarian seeks health *as* health. Like Seged and his ten days of happiness. He sought happiness for ten days ; and found it not, because he sought happiness. The workman seeks work, works away, does duty, and health comes. He seeks one thing ; another is, as it were, added. So it is with peace. Seek for it as peace, and the chance is you will not have it. Work away, do right, follow duty, and, in doing your duty, peace, like health, will come. Now, this illustrates somewhat the mode of teaching of Nature. It will lay down no axioms, preach no sermons, with heads and divisions, lastlies, finalties, and "to conclude," followed by the "improvement ;" but it will bring a state of being, a quickening of spirit, and a tone of mind.

In justification of the condemnation I have passed on the poetry and other literature of the time immediately preceding Wordsworth, I will read a quotation from Carlyle, in which he says, speaking of this very point :—

"Nay, the literature of other countries, placid, self-satisfied as they might seem, was in an equally expectant condition. Every-

where, as in Germany, there was polish and languor, external glitter and internal vacuity ; it was not fire, but a picture of fire, at which no soul could be warmed. Literature had sunk from its former vocation ; it no longer held the mirror up to Nature ; no longer reflected, in many-coloured expressive symbols, the actual passions, the hopes, sorrows, joys of living men ; but dwelt in a remote conventional world, in 'Castles of Otranto,' among 'Epigoniads,' and 'Leonidas,' clear, metallic heroes, and white, high, stainless beauties, in whom the drapery and elocution were nowise the least important qualities. Men thought it right that the heart should swell into magnanimity with Caractacus and Cato, and melt into sorrow with many an Eliza and Adelaide, but the heart was in no haste either to swell or to melt. Some pulses of heroic sentiments, a few unnatural tears, might, with conscientious readers, be actually squeezed forth on such occasions, but they came only from the surface of the mind ; nay, had the conscientious man considered of the matter, he would have found that they ought not to have come at all. Our only English poet of the period was Goldsmith ; a pure, clear, genuine spirit, had he been of depth or strength sufficient : his 'Vicar of Wakefield,' remains the best of all modern idylls : but it is, and was, nothing more. And consider our leading writers ; consider the poetry of Gray, and the prose of Johnson. The first a laborious mosaic, through the hard, stiff lineaments of which little life or true grace could be expected to look : real feeling, and all freedom of expressing it, are sacrificed to pomp, to cold splendour ; for vigour we have a certain mouthing vehemence, too elegant indeed to be turbid, yet essentially foreign to the heart, and seen to extend no deeper than the mere voice and gestures. Were it not for his 'Letters,' which are full of warm exuberant power, we might almost doubt whether Gray was a man of genius ; nay, was a living man at all, and not rather some thousand-times more cunningly-devised poetical turning-loom, than that of Swift's philosophers in Laputa. Johnson's prose is true, indeed, and sound, and full of practical sense : few men have seen more clearly into the motives, the interests, the whole walk and conversation of the living, busy world as it lay before him ; but further than this busy, and, to most of us, rather prosaic world, he seldom looked ; his instruction is for men of business, and in

regard to matters of business alone. Prudence is the highest virtue he can inculcate ; and for that finer portion of our nature, that portion of it which belongs essentially to literature, strictly so called, where our highest feelings, our best joys, and keenest sorrows, our doubt, our love, our religion reside, he has no word to utter ; no remedy, no counsel to give us in our straits ; or, at most, if, like poor Boswell, the patient is importunate, will answer, ‘ My dear sir, endeavour to clear your mind of cant.’ ”

After this, of course, it would be worse than superfluous for me to attempt to say anything further concerning the state of poetry at the time Wordsworth began to write. Wordsworth saw and felt this evil, and it is only by our more or less understanding the state of the case that we can understand those novelties of manner, of diction, of the choice of heroes and of sentiments, which made his poetry so eminently repulsive to the fashionable men, the admirers of the mode of the day. It is easy for us to understand the perfect disgust with which Wordsworth and his beggar troop were regarded by the critics of the day. I have spoken of his diction, and shown what “poetic diction” means, giving a small page from a dictionary of poetic cant, that is, words used whether the feeling is there or not. A religious cant will enable a man to pass muster without any religion ; a poetical cant will enable a man to make a mosaic of words, and rhymes, and phrases, without having a spark of poetry within him. Whenever a thing is technical, whensoever it is a mere art or science, applicable to a few, it is welcome to technical language ; but when the question is one of the widest humanity—of religion, which belongs to us all ; of poetry, which should be in us all—then we must have no technicalisms or cant language. The words of humanity must be used upon questions of humanity—those simple words which go never out of fashion ; those words which are always found on the lips of those who feel simply and who feel deeply. The characters which Wordsworth chose, to utter his words of wisdom, were eminently distasteful to the critics of the day. He has laid down, in one short sentence, the philosophy, not only of his choice of characters, but his choice of diction, and much of the philosophy of his style and opinions. That sentence is :—

“ It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose.

Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day ; it is this,—*that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.*”

Upon the understanding of that little sentence depends our ability to become masters of the peculiarities of Wordsworth. Let us look at it a little. A relic, whether it be a tear of a saint, or a thorn from the cross, gains its importance on account of the place whence it comes ; it is the external that makes the thing important. The autograph in your book, of Milton or Bonaparte, becomes wondrously worthful and significant because one of those men wrote it. The signatures appended to the death-warrant of Charles the First, or those to the Declaration of Independence of the United States, give a meaning and a worth to the most insignificant name that is there. In the autograph book, it is the worth of the man, his greatness, that makes the signature to become important. In the document I have referred to, it is because the principles therein embodied are of such mighty importance, that we become curious to know the whereabouts, the history of the most insignificant name attached to it. There again is the distinction : the one borrows from without ; in the other case, the light and the ennoblement come from within. In the case of the signature of a great man, it is the greatness of the man, external to the signature, that gives it such importance : in the other case, the signature becomes important, because it is appended to such wonderfully significant words. “Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her,” says Christ of the Magdalen. It was the deed, its spirit, its meaning, its indication of the deep feeling in her heart, that gave the Magdalen her importance and historic place. Had she been one of the great ones of the earth, the kneeling would have given the deed its importance, because of the great importance of the kneeler ; but she, an insignificant, unnoted, unknown woman, rises to be one of the standing heroines of all time, by virtue of the spiritual beauty of the deed which she did. Here, then, is another case in which the actual and the outward gains its ennoblement and meaning from the inward feeling of which it was but the outward manifestation. Bonaparte’s razor becomes curious,

because it was his ; just as some stained and rusty swords become gleaming, bright, surrounded with a halo, because they belonged to certain hands. But, on the contrary, there are certain things and persons not intrinsically noble, which become so by the feelings they express. Now, which is the better mode of the two ? Both are original and natural feelings with us. That action and circumstance can give a meaning to a thing which otherwise would have little, we all feel to be true ; but it is an inferior principle of our nature, and an inferior work of art, to that which makes the spirit throw its colour, meaning, and glory over the action and situation. Those of you who understand the philosophy of Christian faith will see clearly that this is its peculiarity ; that it is very careful that the action, situation, status, outward rank, circumstances, of its first teachers, should not give any dignity, worth, or meaning to its sentiments. Christ came poor and despised, that his doctrines might gain nothing from the external. Peter must be a fisherman, that his preaching might not borrow weight and force from the outward circumstances in which he moved. And this must always be the case when the doctrine is wholly divine and true. It needs not to borrow dress ; its beauty is best seen, with least of external trappings ; it is only when there is vacuity within that you need to heap on dress without. This is the rule. The wrinkled cheek asks for paint ; the more beauteous a thing is, the less it needs to borrow from action and situation. When there is light within, it rays out ; where we have opaqueness or vacuity, light must be drawn in. Christianity has that light within it, so that it can ray it out ; it needs nothing from action or situation. And so this great poet felt ; therefore chose he pedlars and paupers, and out of their mouths he makes wisdom to proceed. “ Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God has perfected praise,”—that the very babyhood of the speaker may relieve us from any undue attention to the mere externalities of action and situation. Now, I trust, I have made this peculiarity, this great distinction, plain ; and to this principle Wordsworth has faithfully adhered. It may not have struck some of you before why Wordsworth has so pertinaciously looked out for plain, common-place people to utter his sentiments through. It is that the sentiments may be all things ; the speaker none,—a feeling always possessed by those who have a real message to convey. Mark

men in speaking,—how short, brave, terse, energetic, the man is that has anything to talk about ; and, on the other hand, how wordy, mock eloquent, mock heroic, and how he saws the air,—the man who has little to say. The actual cases in Wordsworth's poetry, illustrative of these truths, must be familiar to all. The poet mentions himself "Poor Susan" and "The Childless Father" as being particular exemplifications of his theory. I might refer also to "Peter Bell." I have been surprised how the admirers of Wordsworth speak slightly and contemptuously of this, to me, most extraordinary poem ; for to me it stands one of the most remarkable of all the poet's works, a fine illustration of this theory too ; the very meanness, lowness, and vulgarity at starting of its hero, gives the more weight and force to the spiritual revolution which it makes. The prologue to "Peter Bell" would, in my opinion, do more to illustrate the peculiarities of Wordsworth, than any talk of mine ; yet I have noticed the students of Wordsworth dismiss this prologue as a piece of light vagary. They do not understand it. To me, it embodies the philosophy of the calm, quiet, simple, thoughtful poems of common life he has given us. "Peter Bell" will be too long to read ; however I may give you a few verses of the prologue, in illustration of what I mean.

"There's something in a flying horse,
 There's something in a huge balloon ;
 But through the clouds I'll never float
 Until I have a little Boat,
 Shaped like the crescent-moon.

"And now I *have* a little Boat,
 In shape a very crescent-moon :
 Fast through the clouds my boat can sail ;
 But if perchance your faith should fail,
 Look up—and you shall see me soon !

* * * * *

"Up goes my Boat among the stars
 Through many a breathless field of light,
 Through many a long blue field of ether,
 Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her :
 Up goes my little Boat so bright !

"The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull—
 We pry among them all ; have shot

High o'er the red-haired race of Mars,
 Covered from top to toe with scars ;
 Such company I like it not !

“ The towns in Saturn are decayed,
 And melancholy spectres throng them ;—
 The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
 Each other in the vast abyss,
 With joy I sail among them.

“ Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
 Great Jove is full of stately bowers ;
 But these, and all that they contain,
 What are they to that tiny grain,
 That little Earth of ours ? ”

It will be seen that the poet has wandered with the boat, in the region of the high romantic, for a little time, through Mercury and Saturn, Jove and the Pleiades ; and having been amongst the stars, he says,—

“ Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth :—
 Whole ages if I here should roam,
 The world for my remarks and me
 Would not a whit the better be ;
 I've left my heart at home.”

This appears to me to be a fine rebuke on the high romantic school, the Castle of Otranto school of poetry, that stands wondering amongst its own worlds of high dramatic splendour, with much of burnt cork and melodramatic red fire,—discoursing concerning worlds of its own creating, it is just forgetting “ what on the earth is doing.” I may be fanciful or otherwise ; but it appears to me that the “ little boat ” of this prologue would represent this high romantic school, and the poet takes one voyage in it and is sick and weary of it, and seeks to come down to “ the dear green earth ” again. Having in this prologue, then, explained and justified his preference of the dear old green earth, with its simple tales ; having stated to us that he needs none of the legendary lore of the middle ages ; that sorrow will have a potent enough wand, without calling up the magician to wave one ; that repentance will do for the spirit ; and that the tear of repentance is sufficiently supernatural he goes on with this marvellous tale of

“Peter Bell.” What does it essay to do? To draw one of the most solemnly marvellous parts of the history of the human mind, to show how we do not need to make an objective supernaturalism; that we do not need a legend, with hosts of ghosts, and visible action; that we want no chains clanking on the genuine limbs of clothes-supporting, though not material, ghosts; that he could do without all that; that to raise up the natural supernatural, such things were not wanted; and he gives us, therefore, Peter Bell, a low vulgar sinner; a man who, in the midst of the fairest scenes of nature, in the midst of his travels, has become hardened and viler. A verse or two I will read, in order to show who the potter is.

“—— ‘A Potter,* sir, he was by trade,
Said I, becoming quite collected;
‘And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.

“ ‘He, two-and-thirty years or more,
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall’s rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

“ ‘And he had seen Cærnarvon’s towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;
And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o’er the fen that ponderous knell—
A far-renowned alarum!

“ ‘At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr;
And far as Aberdeen.

“ ‘And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

* In the dialect of the North, a hawker of earthenware is thus designated.

“ And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
 Among the rocks and winding *scars* ;
 Where deep and low the hamlets lie
 Beneath their little patch of sky
 And little lot of stars :

“ And all along the indented coast,
 Bespattered with the salt sea foam ;
 Where'er a knot of houses lay
 On headland, or in hollow bay ;—
 Sure never man like him did roam !

“ As well might Peter, in the Fleet,
 Have been fast bound, a begging debtor ;—
 He travelled here, he travelled there ;—
 But not the value of a hair
 Was heart or head the better.

“ He roved among the vales and streams,
 In the green wood and hollow dell ;
 They were his dwellings night and day, —
 But Nature ne'er could find the way
 Into the heart of Peter Bell.

“ In vain, through every changeful year,
 Did Nature lead him as before ;
 A primrose by a river's brim
 A yellow primrose was to him,
 And it was nothing more.

“ Small change it made in Peter's heart
 To see his gentle panniered train
 With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
 Where'er the tender grass was leading
 Its earliest green along the lane.

“ In vain, through water, earth, and air,
 The soul of happy sound was spread,
 When Peter on some April morn,
 Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
 Made the warm earth his lazy bed.”

He proceeds to catalogue some of this man's sins, and goes on to give us the history of his transformation, repentance, and regeneration ; and this effected by the power which the conscience

has to put a colour of its own upon ordinary and natural things and appearances. The mysticness in us will make a venerable stump by the waterside into a hideous spectre of fear and terror ; and the white tombstone, through the influence of indwelling fear, can become the sheeted ghost. All in some degree understand these feelings ; how, spite of his philosophy, manhood, strength, and so forth, a curious feeling comes over a man at midnight looking over the village stile into the village graveyard. These feelings are the ground upon which the poet and the artist must build up all their external and objective supernaturalisms. Wordsworth's aim was to show that he could do without the supernatural in the common sense ; that the natural in the man could work, through the bidding of a guilty conscience, and make the same effect upon him as is fabled to come over men by visions of the supernatural, as in the tales that men solemnly tell about people being frightened, made to repent and become converted, by the descent of some mystic spirit of another world, or by the return of some relative, as embodied in the threat sometimes held out, that "If you don't do so and so I'll haunt you." That is the objective external mode of working upon the mind. Wordsworth does otherwise. He does all this for a man without the summoning in of a single spectre or ghost ; the man's guilty conscience clothes commonplaces and external circumstances with a form of dread and terror. The feelings in his mind in these cases are strong and potent ; and under their spell and influence Peter Bell becomes a changed and reformed man. And yet this is a poem at which most people sneer ; a depicting of one of the most strange phenomena of our nature. Remember that the regenerating of one single man like Peter Bell is worth more as a piece of poetry, history, and spiritual teaching, than all the mere tales of passion, melodrama, and romance that the fiery genius of Byron ever put together, or that the Minerva Press ever summoned into existence.

Peter Bell has become an important man. Why so ? Because the poet has made him the outward and visible manifestation of certain inward and spiritual graces or truths ; and here he is true to his theory. The feeling lends the importance, dignity, and worth to the sinning potter, who can give no dignity, importance, or worth to the feeling. The same is the case with the far-famed

pedlar of the "Excursion," of whom the *Edinburgh Review* asked, "What should we think of a man, who, when we were having measured yards of flannel, talked as the pedlar talked?" The poet chose a pedlar, that his feelings should borrow no glory from the pedlar, but should, by the transforming power of spirit, be enabled to throw a halo around him. And so it is. There is in the spirit of man a transfiguring power. We have all seen it to some extent. Look at a countenance dull and meaningless, when we first behold it; touch the spirit within, call up its highest powers, stir it to its very centre, and that dull eye lightens up, that countenance actually beams; and it is hard at times not to believe that it has undergone even an actual and material transformation. The spirit has always this power. It can throw over the material its charm. It can take some dead and rusty piece of iron, and make it shine like a star of beauty, because it was a sword which had been lifted in the cause of truth and right. It can take the mean and insignificant, the veriest relic, and make it, as the ancients did, like a constellation in heaven. For what did the Greeks body forth when they raised the earthly things and made them constellations, but this transfiguring power of the spirit? The poet's lyre translated into the heavens endures and shines for ever; and the cross of the south, so raised, is emblematic of the transfiguring power of the spirit, and becomes to the mariner a sign and a guidance. What were these simple wooden pieces crossed before the time of Christ? Simply a wooden cross, and nothing more. But what have they been since? A rallying sign for Christendom; the sign under which the Crusaders fought and died; the sign under which man bows, laments, repents, and is sorrowful, is forgiven and is glad; and the rallying sign it shall be, even yet, for the truth of freedom, when the days of bigotry and partisanship are over for ever. The rallying sign it has become, through the transfusing of the feeling that it embodies; it has become, as it were, a spiritual constellation in the hemisphere of the world. Of itself, it was nothing; but what was done upon it and through it, has raised it high into glory, and made it the sign of glory and of joy to the thoughtful of the earth. Who, then, would part with Wordsworth's pedlar? Who would exchange him for any Doctor, be he of Divinity, Science, or Philosophy? What wise man among us would say, "Instead of this your

pedlar, let us have some man with titles, with external magnificence, or one who makes up for his natural insignificance by standing on some high pedestal upon which the dunces of the age may have placed him." For there are little men who owe their elevation not to their stature, but to their situation. Their greatness comes not from within; it is put upon them from without. Men have always standing by them a row of pedestals, and, by some unlooked-for accident, or high superhuman design, in order that the world's discipline may be kept up, that the righteous may not have always his desert, and the fool may occasionally get into high places,—upon a pedestal there is put up some very little pygmy. Well, the man owes his greatness not to the feeling, but to the action and situation. The truly great man, pedestalled or unpedestalled, throws a halo around him. Wherever a saint comes, the old painter makes a halo of light and glory. The one man glorifies, and the other has glory thrust upon him. The one man is made by circumstances, and the other makes the circumstances. Let us, then, keep Peter Bell the potter, and the pedlar of the "Excursion," rather than exchange them for any bearded Doctor of Philosophy, or any of those great ones from whom, only, the little will hear words of wisdom. There is a single verse of Wordsworth's which expresses his peculiarities even in plainer fashion:—

"The moving accident is not my trade :
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts :
'Tis my delight alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts."

I will now proceed to what I have just indicated before, the teachings of Nature, as embodied by Wordsworth. I have already warned you of the common mistake made by men, when they profess not to be able to learn anything from Nature; simply because they expect Nature will teach them in the form of propositions. They have heard that there are "sermons in stones," and they have no idea of a sermon except it begins with its introduction, and then the firstly, secondly, and thirdly; and, having got through the heads and divisions, comes to the "lastly"—ten minutes,—then "finally"—five or ten minutes more,—and "now to conclude;"—and then, having concluded, ends with a "few

words of practical improvement." Now, so prevalent is this notion of a sermon, that if a man does not take a text, and give the heads, people will say, "That is not a sermon; it is a lecture." They say, "I should like to hear that on a Monday, but I don't think it is quite proper for a Sunday." This is not fancy, but fact; and it has happened to me more than once, that because I had not my heads prepared, assorted, and arranged, because the discourse was not moving along in this orthodox, cut-and-dry fashion, it was said not to be fit for Sunday but for Monday, and not for a chapel but for a lecture-hall; that it might do for such a place as a Mechanics' Institute, but, verily, not for a Sunday sermon. People expect something of this kind from Nature. They say, "We have been out into Nature, and we never gained much there." Verily, it was never intended they should. They are Peter Bell sort of people:—

"A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more,"—

whereas, to Wordsworth, the simplest flower could awake "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." I have illustrated this with the case of portraits taken by the sun. Plate after plate may be put out to have a picture taken, but in vain; because the due chemistry has not been exercised on the plate beforehand, to prepare it. So you may put man after man out into Nature, expecting that it will write its beauty there, in vain. Peter Bell was not prepared to have any portraiture made upon him; and I fear many are not much better prepared. The teachings of Nature are like that peace which passeth knowledge, not to be had for the seeking. For such is the spiritual law of things. Work; do your duty; do right; do the proper thing that comes nearest to you, and the other will be added. It is but the philosophy expressed of old, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and these things"—that is, bread, food, health, riches, "shall be added to you"—given in, as it were. Nature rather brings a state over us, it rather attunes the soul, than lays down peculiar propositions or teachings. I will illustrate this by a quotation from perhaps the most beautiful lines which Wordsworth has ever written. A few people may feel them tedious, but for those few I am not lecturing. They are here by

accident, and as I am not bound to attend to the accidents, I shall read the whole of the lines. What I wish to be principally noted is, the exemplification they give of this teaching of Nature; that it is necessarily somewhat undefinable. They are those beautiful lines composed near Tintern Abbey, on the banks of the Wye.

“ Five years have passed ; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters ! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur *—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
’Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild : these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit’s cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye :
But oft, in lonely rooms, and ’mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man’s lie,

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

His little, nameless, unremembered acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world
 Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.”*

I would call special attention to some of those words and phrases which appear more particularly to illustrate the meaning of the poet :—

———“ Sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
 And passing into my purer mind
 With tranquil restoration.”

———“ Serene and blessed mood.”

———“ We are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul.”

Not showing us the thing, so much as giving us vision power, to see into the life of things.

Then he speaks of the power of Nature to calm, soothe, and quiet the fevered mind, worn out by the thousand and one pains of daily life, the fear of giving offence, and the continual harass and care of the struggle of daily life. It has been said, and perhaps well, that the poems of Wordsworth are hardly for youth ; there is so little of passion in them. Young men who are deeply charmed with Byron will care little for Wordsworth. His are not the words of passion, thrown like sparks from iron, through the heat thereof. They are for us when we have none of the world, and are just a little tired of it. Wordsworth's poems do for a man

* As Wordsworth's Poems are so accessible, it seems unnecessary to quote here the remaining two-thirds of these Lines.

what a quiet unworking Sabbath does to us, wearied out with six days' work. He was right who said that poetry ought to be to literature what the Sabbath is to the other six days. Wordsworth has kept this Sabbath-day holy ; and the influences of his poems come over us as gently as do the village bells upon a fair, unworking Sabbath morning. He is a poet to come to, a day or two after we have laid a dear friend in the tomb ; when the chill hand of death has made us thoughtful, and predisposed us to wisdom, and opened the heart to its lessons. The poems of Wordsworth come upon us like a cool hand laid on a fevered brow. They stay our restlessness, resembling the influence which Nature has here, or the influence of her mother over her little child, by whom, when it is vexed and irritated, it is at once calmed and brought back to repose. Fretted and weary, what man ever went forth into Nature that did not return soothed and refreshed? How strange the influence which a calm summer night will have in allaying the heart-fever ! How the "voluntary" then played by Nature seems to predispose the soul to worship, as a good voluntary, played by a wise musician, prepares the orator for a higher strain than he would otherwise have attained. Herein has the poet not studied Nature in vain ; for in literature he does that which I have shown Nature to do. It is the book for the weary and the worn. His is the nearest approach (and I say it reverently) in poetry to the gentle words which say, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is the most beautiful prophecy in poetry (and I say it reverently) of the land "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." For, in these poems, the din of passion is not heard, the hot fever of the heart is not known ; they are gentle, thoughtful, with a deep and quiet joy which makes them so calming, beneficent, restorative, and refreshing

III.

I will now pass on to consider Wordsworth's doctrine of the preparation of man to receive instruction from Nature. The great proposition will be found to be the need of quietness and silence ; he is an enemy to babble and talk ; and holds that in order to be taught by Nature, we must be comparatively passive.

Now, if this is a true law, it will explain why so few men are taught by Nature; for those who know how to be silent are unhappily the exception among men, and in these times we seem threatened with an over-doing of babble. Every man feels bound to utter his small saying; and though I, of course, for my very profession's sake, would be the last to speak against all speaking, yet, unless a man has the faculty and talent of silence as well as of speech, his talk will be apt to degenerate into the mere babble of shallowness like a brook noisy through its lack of depth. I will first quote several passages from Wordsworth, in which he propounds the preparation of the heart necessary to receive wisely the instruction of Nature, and then endeavour to examine the principle. The small piece called "The Tables Turned," will show the doctrine, perhaps, pushed to an extreme. For instance, take the verse—

"One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
 Of moral evil, and of good,
 Than all the sages can."

At first sight this seems a startling proposition, one which the experience of but few can verify. Can anyone assure me that they ever knew what it was to be taught more of moral evil and of good by a vernal impulse than by the sages? Simply because they miscalculate the nature of the two teachings; the sages can lay down proposition and rule, the impulses from the vernal wood can make healthy the spirit. The sages can give their propositions to an unhealthy spirit, and leave it unhealthy. A man sickly in body and soul may read the books of the sages, understand their propositions, carry them with him, and remain licentious, sickly, and unclean; simply because the propositions, in order to produce a state, must have a double action; we must get the proposition, and then apply it of our own will, before it can operate upon the moral being. The proposition may lie bedridden and dormant in the mind, the mind being left in the same state in which the propositional teaching found it. But, on the other hand, the influences of Nature do not so much put anything into the mind, either pure or diseased, but they alter the character of the mind. By thus going to the source of being, to the fountain-

head of our nature, Nature is enabled to do what the poet says it does, "teach us more than sages can."

A thought of past experience will show this. All must be aware of the influence which the scenes of Nature produce upon the mind,—the calming and the quieting which they exercise. And they even go further and deeper than this. History is full of cases in which men of hardened nature and of sinning life, when suddenly brought into the midst of the sublime and beautiful scenes of Nature, have been awe-stricken or conscience-smitten, or have felt for a time devout. You will know the influence which certain scenes have in producing devoutness of feeling and kindness of heart. The state is reached immediately, whereas a book can only reach it mediately. The very nature of the teaching of Nature makes it difficult to reduce it into formal words. The proof of all such things may lie in a man's own experience; the proof of Wordsworth being right or wrong must lie with ourselves. We must look back upon past life; upon the cases in which we have held communion with the works of Nature, and sum up what they have done for us. Never mind how fleeting and evanescent was the emotion; did they summon up any moral feelings? Did they incite to any devout wishes, tend to check evil, and bring a longing for good? Most of you will have seen how strangely ignoble appears to be much of our life, when we take it out of the dens in which it is carried on, into the fresh air of Nature. For it is to the mind, as it happens in common life. The bright sunlight of the morning is let into the room where the evening's feasting has been; and verily the romance goes out of it, and that which looked glorious at night time is hideous and contemptible by natural morning light. So with much of our life. It seems to fill the whole canvass; by artificial light it seems good and true; but let in the sunlight upon it, and it becomes deformed and hideous; what *there* looked freshness and bloom, is found to be but spectral deformity. Such contrasts are healthful for the soul. Whatsoever tends to make the truly mean *look* mean, to make the conventional *merely* conventional, to reduce the spectre to its proper deformity, is a healthful teaching for the mind. This, communing with Nature does. It reduces art and artifice to their proper places.

We may go further than this; and having been brought into a

certain state or feeling by Nature, we may proceed to Nature again, and get not a proposition, but the confirming of a proposition; and though we may not learn an opinion, we may always learn manners and method. It matters little (as I have said before), whether we receive opinions ready-made from Nature, or whether Nature becomes the origination of certain valuable thoughts, feelings, imaginations, and opinions in us. Many are the confirmations of thought which a thinker may receive from natural objects. We may wish to know, for instance, the method of the common-weal: how society shall best attain that harmonic beauty which it ought to have. Look over the surface of the green grass lawns, and see how smooth and level the whole is, and then penetrate to its law, and remember that this velvet-like smoothness is made by the shooting up of separate and individual blades. So is it in the well-ordered common-weal or society. The erection of each man in a perfect individuality; the keeping of each man in his due and proper place, position, and duties; each is a grass-blade, fully formed, to a certain degree independent of its neighbour; fulfilling its own functions, obedient to its own laws, keeping duly apart from its neighbour, and maintaining its right as an individual. You may say that this is fanciful. Granted; but yet it may confirm and illustrate a truth.

From another poet I may read a few lines, which may help to indicate the somewhat mystic teachings of Nature, and also the quiet spirit in which they are to be received.

MIDNIGHT.

(By JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.)

The moon shines white and silent
 On the mist, which, like a tide
 Of some enchanted ocean,
 O'er the wide marsh doth glide,
 Spreading its ghost-like billows
 Silently far and wide.

A vague and starry magic
 Makes all things mysteries,
 And lures the earth's dumb spirit
 Up to the longing skies, -
 I seem to hear dim whispers,
 And tremulous replies,

The fireflies o'er the meadow
In pulses come and go ;
The elm-trees' heavy shadow
Weighs on the grass below ;
And faintly from the distance
The dreaming cock doth crow.

All things look strange and mystic,
The very bushes swell
And take wild shapes and motions
As if beneath a spell,—
They seem not the same lilacs
From childhood known so well.

The snow of deepest silence
O'er everything doth fall,
So beautiful and quiet,
And yet so like a pall,—
As if all life were ended,
And rest were come to all.

O wild and wondrous midnight
There is a might in thee
To make the charmed body
Almost like spirit be,
And give it some faint glimpses
Of immortality !

The reason will be obvious why such teachings can only be received by quietness and passiveness. If they are looked upon as healings, then must we borrow a phrase from the medical art, and the person to be healed must be a "patient," or a "sufferer." Were Nature a thing understood,—a book,—then must we bring to it certain activities ; but as its influences are rather those of an inspirer, or of a physician,—its character healing, calming, and curative,—we must be patient, and submit thereto. Under the plea of industry, and under protest against idleness, few men do cultivate, as they should, passiveness of soul. You know how Utilitarianism will come in, and, seeing a man upon the grass on a sunny day, resigned to the wise passiveness of Wordsworth, will proceed to read him a long moral lecture on idleness ; will tell him of some study, or good philanthropic scheme that he might be

working out, or some trade speculation that he might be carrying on. Now, we have carried activity, perhaps, too far. Unmitigated activity will make us noisy and hot. It will cause to arise a set of men so busy as to neglect the wants of the inward life. Therein has Wordsworth been a notable teacher for this age; for it is an age of activity and noise. There be few deep, quiet, and meditative natures amongst us. Our very study is of this noisy kind. We catalogue the amount of our studies by the quantum we get through, and not by the amount of thinking which is called up. To *get through* books is the object; not to have a life created and sustained within by them. Now this activity, noisiness, haste, are all thrown away upon Nature. It will not answer to any babbling interrogatories; and he who will be taught, must be silent and quiet.

This doctrine, applied to religion and other matters, will be called mysticism, or quietism, exemplified in Madame Guyon, whose cardinal doctrine is the necessity of aspirants being quiet and remaining passive, in order that the teachings of the Spirit of God may come to us. It will be found necessary to guard carefully against confounding the idleness of vacuity and the passiveness of a wise man. Between real idleness and passiveness or quietism, there is a broad distinction. The true and essential nature of idleness is to do nothing when there is something to be done. A lazy man is one who, when there is work, does not do it; an idle man is one who, when he ought to be active, is not. But remember, that to a wise man there are times when he *ought* to *do* nothing; therefore, in such case, to do nothing is not to be idle; times, when he should be passive, and, therefore, passivity is not a sin. There is an historic proof of this found in the lives of the greatest thinkers, that they are oftentimes the quietest of men. They have all left their testimony that the man who does not at times cultivate solitariness, who cannot be alone, who does not willingly be alone, never will be the producer of high and great thoughts. A man must go into the desert, in order to be fit to guide the people. So it is written of John the Baptist, of Elijah, and of Christ himself; they sojourned there, in their solitariness and passiveness, resigning themselves to spiritual influences, that they might be tempted and become strong. Those who would be teachers of men must have certain periods

of quiet and meditation. Quietism and passiveness are to the soul what sleep is to the body. Sleep refreshes the body, because during it the body remains comparatively passive and quiet. Due hermitage, solitude and quietism, passiveness and resignation, are the sleep of the soul; and the soul needs this sleep as regularly as can the body possibly need its rest. What is the effect on a man who has physically neglected sleep? His nerves at last become deranged, he becomes a hypochondriac, and his life must be a continual feverish attempt, by the supply of small stimulants, to get up energy enough for the pressing occasion. Such, too, is the life of those minds who do not give themselves the due quiet, passiveness, and solitude. They must always have a stimulant immediately applied, in order to get any work from them. Some of you may know what it is to sit down to think on a subject, and find that not a thought will come until you take down some book relating to the subject; and then, by reading the thoughts of the writer, you are enabled to fill up the blank and vacuity there would otherwise have been. When this happens not to a child, but to a man, it tells a tale; it shows us that the man must have an immediate stimulant—that unless he can get a ready-made thought, nothing will come from him. This arises from the neglect of meditation and quiet. Few men, now-a-days, understand what meditation means. They confound it with reasoning, with thinking,—but it is neither. Meditation is almost a passive state; it is the resignation of the mind to be played upon by influences, whether spiritual, from above, or whether terrestrial, of the earth. It is not mere vacuity; it is not the mere “thinking of nothing” of the countryman, but it is an exercise of the mind, “which gives us no matter for criticism or doubt, but everything for wonder and for love.” Many of us think, few of us meditate; the fear of being idle keeps many of us from being duly meditative. I will read an extract from Coleridge, which will set these matters before you:—

“But it is time to tell the truth, though it requires some courage to avow it in an age and country in which disquisitions on all subjects, not privileged to adopt technical terms or scientific symbols, must be addressed to the public. I say, then, that it is neither possible nor necessary for all men, or for many, to be philosophers. There is a philosophic (and inasmuch as it is

actualized by an effort of freedom, an artificial) consciousness, which lies beneath, or (as it were) behind the spontaneous consciousness natural to all reflecting beings. As the elder Romans distinguished their northern provinces into Cis-Alpine and Trans-Alpine, so may we divide all the objects of human knowledge into those on this side, and those on the other side of the spontaneous consciousness; *citra et trans conscientiam communem*. The latter is exclusively the domain of pure philosophy, which is therefore properly entitled transcendental, in order to discriminate it at once, both from mere reflection and representation on the one hand, and, on the other, from those flights of lawless speculation which, abandoned by all distinct consciousness, because transgressing the bounds and purposes of our intellectual faculties, are justly condemned as transcendent. The first range of hills that encircles the scanty vale of human life is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On its ridges, the common sun is born and departs. From them the stars rise, and, touching them, they vanish. By the many even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden by mists and clouds from uncultivated swamps, which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. To the multitude below, these vapours appear, now as the dark haunts of terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity; and now, all aglow with colours not their own, they are gazed at as the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few, who, measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls, have learnt that the sources must be far higher and far inward: a few who, even in the level streams, have detected elements which neither the vale itself, nor the surrounding mountains contained, or could supply. How and whence to these thoughts, these strong probabilities, the ascertaining vision, the intuitive knowledge may finally supervene, can be learnt only by the fact. I might oppose to the question the words with which Plotinus supposes Nature to answer a similar difficulty: 'Should any one interrogate her how she works, if graciously she vouchsafe to listen and speak, she will reply,—It behoves thee not to disquiet me with interrogatories, but to understand in silence, even as I am silent, and work without words.'

Likewise, in the fifth book of the fifth *Æneid*, speaking of the highest and intuitive knowledge, as distinguished from the discursive, or in the language of Wordsworth—

‘The vision and the faculty divine,’

he says; ‘It is not lawful to enquire from whence it sprang, as if it were a thing subject to place and motion; for it neither approached hither, nor again departs from hence to some other place; but it either appears to us or it does not appear. So that we ought not to pursue it with a view of detecting its secret source, but to watch in quiet till it suddenly shines upon us; preparing ourselves for the blessed spectacle, as the eye waits patiently for the rising sun.’*’

The extract is clouded, rather, by some peculiar words of philosophy, but the similes employed in these matters are beautiful;—that on the common appearances, the hills that bound the horizon of life, the sun seemed to rise and set; but that men in the valleys below found in the rivers grains of a precious metal not belonging to the valley; and this led them to the belief, that beyond the valley there lay sources of knowledge and wisdom, hills of eternal truth. That the quiet teachings of Nature must be met by quietism, our own experience will teach us, if we note the effect of the beautiful scenes of Nature; how they hush and quiet men; how the grander scenes will reduce a babbling party to silence; and how excessively annoyed, teased, and tormented we are, when, in the midst of scenery of great beauty, we are bestirred by the companion at our side, who *will* run through the same commonplace adjectives, not because he feels much, but because he feels little, and supplies his scanty feelings by long, loud, and liberal phrases. Of all the bores a man can meet with, none pester the thoughtful man so much as he who is continually exclaiming, “How beautiful”! or “How sublime”! as it may chance. Coleridge, once, by the Falls of Clyde, could not find the proper word to express himself, when someone by his side immediately gave it him, and Coleridge turned round to thank him. However, he immediately followed it up by an adjective so misplaced, that he showed himself to be merely going through the picturesque traveller’s prepared cant, which may be found in guide books and

* COLERIDGE: *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xii.

in guides, who, not content with showing you a thing, tell you how you should feel about it,—how such and such emotions should arise in your mind. I remember a friend being at Berlin, a place not distinguished by beauty of scenery, and the guide took him into some small tea-gardens in the suburbs, where there was an artificial mound. As they were about to ascend the mound, the guide said, “Now prepare for sublime emotions”! and led him up the small elevation, wrapped, of course, in sublimity of emotion. All this babble is destructive of the teaching of Nature. The very fact that in still nights, amid beautiful scenery, the tongue learns to be quiet, almost intuitively, gives a law for the student of Nature. Whatsoever comes spontaneously when a man, not hardened and spoiled, stands in the midst of the more beautiful things of Nature, is the rule and the law for the artificial culture. Now I find that in such situations we want to say nothing,—talk is an impertinence, babble a bore; and a companion who will utter what all feel, is the greatest nuisance that can come upon us. This, then, gives the law,—that if we would have these teachings of Nature which produce frames and feelings, and which have a curative and a sanative influence upon the soul, we must be resigned; we must be patient, that Nature may speak. The same doctrine is laid down in Scripture, with regard to the doings of God. “Stand still, and see what God will do;” never, of course, countenancing indulgence or inactivity, in the sense I have named, but merely indicating that that still small voice which came to the prophet with a mightier power than the whirlwind, the tempest, or the storm, can only be heard when there is a lull and a hush of the outward, the accidental, and circumstantial. The solemn ticking of the great clock of time can only be heard when the wheels and the hum of the great city are unheard. At night-time we hear the march of time best. Nature, teaching with a still small voice, will only be heard by minds that have laid asleep the turmoil of passion, the hum of active life, and who are thus, in quiet and stillness, resigned to her teaching. The culture of passiveness will make one of the chief doctrines of what is called the mystic school; and to a certain extent Wordsworth is a mystic.

When does mysticism run into excess? When it not only strives to make the subjective (that is, what is true within a man)

objective, by writing it down in words, or painting it in a picture ; but when it strives to make this, true of the man, also true of his neighbour. Mysticism is holy and beautiful, if it does not become authoritative and damnatory. It is usual to sneer at mysticism, whether represented by Boëhm, or Swedenborg of more modern times ; the ardent visions of Dante, or the calmer and quieter mysticism of Wordsworth. But mysticism is a thing which belongs to great men. There goes on within them a life to a certain extent independent of the outward ; and wheresoever a man refers outward things to inward feelings, wheresoever he clothes the outward with dress borrowed from history that happens within him, to a certain extent he is a mystic. If he goes further than this,—if, having succeeded in reducing to outward form what goes on within him, he requires that another man too shall dream the same dreams, and have the same visions ; and if he lays down the inward truth as an outward reality, then has his mysticness transcended the bounds of sanity, or at least of wisdom. There need be no outcry against mystics, for the people are not obliged to believe their visions. The man who can sneer at or despise the sublime mysticism of the men I have mentioned, may go quietly on his little way,—their visions are not for him, he will never understand them. They may not be intelligible, but he is not intelligent. But for those who do watch much the interior life, there can scarcely be found a set of books of more real value, of more use, than those which portray the phantasmagoria of a great man's mind, and bring out the pictures which Nature, History, Religion, Time, and Life, write upon the mind of a great man. It is one of the most valuable portions of human lore, that one man shall be allowed to look upon another's mind, and see the shifting picture ; the outward life written there. It has the use which the circular mirror has. The prospect is too wide, or too bright, and we wish to reduce it to such a form as can be used for daily purpose. We turn from the scene to the mirror, and by its contracting, yet faithful representation, we have a vision, *in petto*, of that which is too gigantic for us. The *camera* has its use, to reduce that which is too great for our gaze, and present it in a smaller form. So with some revelations of the inward life of a great man. For most of us, human life presents too wide an horizon, its problems are too many, and too intricate for our grasp.

The poet or author comes before us, and in the mirror of his mind, the *camera* of his intellect, he reduces, yet more or less faithfully, this picture which is too vast for our limited knowledge.

You may blot out all history if you will, but shut not out mystic poetic lore. Poetry is a far truer thing than history. History may deal with facts, but poetry with truths; for facts are not necessarily truths. They may be true, but it takes many of them to make a truth. You know how, in chemistry, many a flower must be put into the still before one drop of precious essence can be got at the other end; so, into the still of the thinking mind, must be poured many a fact, before one precious truth will distil and drop. These mystics, then, oftentimes utter truths, they utter their revelations, they tell us how life looks to them, what Nature does for them, what it has wrought upon them; and in this sense Wordsworth is a mystic. He clothes natural appearances with what they do for him. He tells us what such a flower teaches him, what such a scene produces in him. He has gone through certain geographical localities, and hung upon them colours borrowed from inward life; and where many of us would have found but the dead fact, having read his works, we go and find living truth. Many a man may have looked at the scenes of Westmoreland as a mere fact; but now Wordsworth has hung upon each of them a precious gem of truth. He has associated, by the power of genius, fact and truth side by side: so that is done for us by secondary means, which, by primary influence, genius does for him. Here is the use of a teacher. The poet comes and brings the truth; Nature supplies the fact. They then rise up together, the one given, the other comes. Oftentimes we have the fact, but no truth will come. There is a fountain, and it remains a fountain. It was there when we came, and will be so when we go. But when the poet comes, he points out a truth thereby hung. When a simile, a law concerning purity, has been drawn therefrom, ever afterwards with us, when the fact, the fountain comes, the truth of which it is illustrative comes too. Thus it is the poet's duty to double all things, like the water of a lake. We have the sky above, and in the watery hemisphere below we have sky again. This dualism runs much through Wordsworth's works. We not only have the blue sky as blue sky, but we have it in the mind of the poet, which lies

calm and quiet like, to reflect the beauty and blessedness of Nature. Therefore should men be thankful to their poets. God has not given poetic power to all. Thoughts and facts do not suggest one another to us all. The poet comes and weds together, for ever and for all, thought and fact, truth and mere visual appearance, so that by him Nature becomes, even to those of the smallest original and creative power, a true teacher, a prophet, and a minister.

IV.

I have spoken somewhat of the time when Wordsworth's poems best come and are of most use to us; not when the fever-fit of youth is upon us, and the world is all untasted and untried; but just when a man is recovering from his first great sorrow, his first great eclipse, whether mental or external. Then is the time to take up this book, and in its still, sad, and yet oft-times joyous music, in its quiet, clear teaching, its calm, high, philosophic tones, repose and relief will be found. Especially, too, it is a book to be read when a man has been over-much in the world, and is oppressed by the work of the world. The poet seems to have designed it to be a curative or corrective of that over-attention to material and external interests, in which many of us, against our will, are involved. How piteously he laments this influence of worldliness over us! How he protests against it, in that noble sonnet he begins—

“The world is too much with us.”

I'll read the sonnet:—

“The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.”

Of course the poet must be answerable for the shocking, untheologic, impiety of wishing himself a Pagan. But there are passages in it which will confirm what I have been saying of the influence of Nature. He says worldliness has put us "out of tune," and the only cure is to go forth into Nature thinking nothing about it; to go out in the aimless spirit in which a man strolls out in a summer evening, because it is fine. This will re-tune; it will restore that quietness and placidity, which is a soul sleep, enabling us to gather up and cultivate those powers which "getting and spending" have laid waste. I propose to read a few of Wordsworth's sonnets, not only as embodying his peculiar opinions, but as also teaching some of the great truths concerning freedom.

"Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
 We may find pleasure; wilderness and wood;
 Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
 Which with the lofty sanctifies the low,
 Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and good;
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
 Our pastime and our happiness will grow,
 There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
 Matter wherein right voluble I am,
 To which I listen with a ready ear;
 Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
 The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
 And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb."

If any are displeased with the slighting mode in which Wordsworth speaks of books, in comparison with Nature, their restorative will be found here, in which he gives such pre-eminence to books, and winds up by giving two of those he loves best. For stateliness of language and loftiness of sentiment, perchance the next sonnet stands above all in the world. I am not aware that any sonnets in the language can be compared with the best of Wordsworth's. Even Milton looks somewhat pale by the side of five that might be culled out of the choicest of Wordsworth's works.

"Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee; she is a fen

Of stagnant waters ; altar, sword and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart ;
Thou had'st a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So did'st thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

There is one sonnet to which a recent painful event has attached a painful interest, and which I heard the great poet himself speak of as having struck him with its strange and unexpected prophetic tone. It is that in which he addresses the lamented Haydon, the man who bore up against much, and bore it long, but not quite long enough,—he who gave way at last to that adversity and neglect against which he long battled so bravely. There is a mournful, prophetic sort of warning to the artist in the sonnet. One line is expressive of all Haydon's troubles, "The long-lived pressure of obscure distress."

"High is our calling, Friend !—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues),
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And oh ! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard !" *

* Poor Haydon's end is thus referred to in Chambers' Book of Days :—
"One morning in June [1846] the hapless man was found in his painting room prostrate in front of his picture of 'Alfred the Great and the First British Vry.' His diary, a small portrait of his wife, his prayer-book, his watch, and letters to his wife and children, were all orderly arranged ; but, for the rest—a pistol and a razor had ended his earthly troubles."

There is a passage or two of "The Excursion" bearing on my previous assertion, concerning the principles of Wordsworth, with respect to the getting of wisdom from Nature rather than the getting of mere knowledge from study.

"Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
 What soul was his, when, from the naked top
 Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
 Beneath him:—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces could he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
 The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him; they swallowed up
 His animal being; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live; they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love!"

Small criticisms have been spent upon the passage; and I have heard of its "dangerous tendency," as, instead of affirmative religion, giving us a kind of obscure religiousism. Very few need take alarm. Very few know what it is to be wrapt in communion that transcends them. The mind which is capable of such feelings as the poet describes, is just the one that will not in the least be injured by the absence of the verbal expression so essentially necessary to minds of a lower calibre; for some minds *must* speak. To some, their safety of a feeling is talking about it. There are some to whom the uttered words of prayer are the summoners up of the inward devotion. But there are some who know what it is to be wrapt in communings, in which the very fulness of feeling prevents speech. For them alone does the poet write such advice as I am about to read.

“ For, the Man—

Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of Nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down ;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good ; and finds the good he seeks :
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name ; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate ; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.”

In these few lines are summed up what Nature has done for the poet, and what he has done for us in his works,—the gradual mellowing of the character, the taking away of its roughness and sharp angles ; and bringing in that calm, quiet, not dispassionate, but yet not angry, frame and feeling, which would regard all men with loving-kindness ; nay, which would go further than man, and throw the mantle of gentleness and love, not only over things animate, but come to look upon Nature with the feeling expressed by Goëthe when he speaks of seeing a brother in the damp bush. For the poet would bring us into that state that we feel ourselves one and at home with Nature. Nature's work is done when it has brought us to the same point that true religion seeks to bring us to,—reconciliation and restoration. For the doings of Nature are but a continual effort at reconcilment. We put up some new erection,—ugly and angular,—in the midst of some beauteous scene. Nature will soon be at work, and if possible bring about harmony again. There is whitewash, white as it can be ; there are angles, sharp as they can be ; and everything is a mar and a

blot upon the fair scene. Nature will stain the whitewash, fritter away the angles, and incessantly labour to reduce that hideous eye-sore into harmony with its own tints and forms. The ivy on the ruin is another reconciling effort of Nature. It attempts to reduce the sharp forms which man has put upon it, and bring it back again to the beauteous and gentle curves which Nature loves. This it does also with the mind of man. Sometimes we go forth into Nature and feel so unfit to be there, so out of joint, out of tune; that even the sunshine is troublesome, because there is darkness within; we feel unnatural, not a part of nature, but like some picturesque tourist to have come into it. The poet here has been brought into harmony with nature. His passion is tempered down; his angles of prejudice and hatred rounded off; the parts of his nature which are rugged, clothed over.

It would be doing injustice to Wordsworth if any were suffered to believe concerning his poems that they are all dealing with what is common-place or small. It is true that, to use a simile, he is the poet of the microscope; that his poems are purposely microscopic; that he finds it to be his duty so to do; seeing that it is easy enough to see the poetry of the vast: that the Colossus of Rhodes is the colossus to everyone, and Alexander the Great is a mighty man to everybody. He does what few can do. He goes to the small and the neglected, to give us the poetry found there. Out of the smallest branch of entomological science, the man who is not a mere science-catalogue maker, but a real student, can draw vast deductions and mighty theories. The revelations of the microscope can excite feelings of adoration and veneration as strong as can be brought down from above by any contemplation of the starry heavens. The poet, having looked upon the small, rises to the contemplation of the vast, and we see how he who can so clothe the unknown and despised with a halo of moral beauty, is yet enabled to lead us into that highest realm of thought, fancy, and hope, which has been regarded as pre-eminently the land of the great masters of poesy. I need but turn to that ode, the most beauteous in the English language, "The intimations of Immortality, from recollections of early childhood." The old Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of

the soul is beautifully put by Wordsworth, in the passage commencing :—

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar :
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home :
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.”

Few of you, perhaps, are familiar with the works of an old English poet, Henry Vaughan.* It may, then, be interesting to hear how the same notion is put by a poet of an earlier age. I do not say that Wordsworth borrowed it therefrom, because a thought that belonged to Plato lies borrowable to every succeeding poet. † I will read you an extract from this author.

* A native of Brecknockshire. Born 1614, died 1695. He studied the law but afterwards adopted the medical profession. His poems were first published in 1651.

† The experience also which occurred to Plato remains essentially possible to succeeding poets, and may have occurred to Vaughan. As an example, take the following from Sir Walter Scott's diary, under date Feb. 17, 1828 :— I cannot, I am sure, tell if it is worth marking down, that yesterday, at dinner-time, I was strongly haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence, in a confirmed idea that nothing which passed was said for the first time ; that the same topics had been discussed, and the same persons had stated the same opinions on them The sensation was so strong as to resemble what is called a *mirage* in the desert, or a *calenture* on board ship It was very distressing yesterday, and brought to my mind the fancies of Bishop Berkeley about an ideal world. There was a vile sense of want of reality in all I did and said.—LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott*.

THE RETREAT.

BY HENRY VAUGHAN.

"Happy those early days, when I
 Shin'd in mine angel infancy !
 Before I understood this place
 Appointed for my second race,
 Or taught my soul to fancy aught
 But a white, celestial thought—
 When yet I had not walked above
 A mile or two from my first love,
 And looking back, at that short space,
 Could see a glimpse of his bright face—
 When on some gilded cloud or flower,
 My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
 And in those weaker glories spy
 Some shadows of eternity :
 Before I taught my tongue to wound
 My conscience with a sinful sound :
 Or had the black art to dispense
 A several sin to every sense,
 But felt through all this fleshy dress
 Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back,
 And tread again that ancient track !
 That I might once more reach that plain
 Where first I left my glorious train !
 From whence the enlightened spirit sees
 That shady city of palm trees.
 But ah ! my soul with too much stay
 Is drunk, and staggers in the way.
 Some men a forward motion love,
 But I by backward steps would move :
 And when this dust falls to the urn,
 In that state I came, return."

Confessedly, what I have said in this lecture, has been an attempt not to criticise the whole of the poet's works, but to do what I think is more needful, to illustrate some of the many principles which run through them. There were two ways open to me ; to repeat the usual things said concerning Wordsworth, to be gained by a careful collation of all the reviews of his works, plentifully illustrated with passages, which you can read at home.

I might have supplied you with an "argument" of the whole, a catalogue of his works, and illustrations. But it appeared to be a better plan to dwell on some few of the leading principles of the poet, and strive, by such power of explication as I might have, to make them clearer and clearer. My office of criticism upon such poets is not to dissect them; it is not to spend too much time upon the particular beauties, upon select passages; but rather to attempt to reproduce in you, by simpler and plainer means, the feelings which they have striven to embody in their works. I have selected but two or three principles, and they are these:—the lessons to be learned from small things; the great principle that the feeling gives dignity to the situation and action, rather than that the feeling borrows dignity from the action and situation. I have endeavoured to show, by the state of poetic literature at the time when Wordsworth began to write, the necessity of that lesson, and even if the poet pushed it to excess, its excess was caused by its previous deficiency; that in the choice of his heroes—pedlars and beggars—he was guided by this principle, which guided the selection of the earlier preachers of the Christian faith,—that the thought should not have greatness thrust upon it, but, by its inherent greatness, should put a glory on the external. Here teaching the transfiguring power of the spirit, that where there is light within, that light will ray out and cover the external with its glory; but where there is vacuity of mind, though there may be rank, dress, all the enviring things of pomp and circumstance, that the vacuity of thought may be supplemented by the gorgeousness of the clothing, there is no true glory. A large part of poetry owes its attraction to this,—to dealing with the external. It is often but a poetical catalogue, somewhat similar to that given by the *Court Journal* after a court day, or a court ball, specifying the colour of the trains, the pattern of the dresses, and all those things which fill up the pomp and pageantry of state. I could indicate poem after poem which is nothing more than a mere catalogue of external glory. The whole of this Wordsworth eschewed; the old pomp of Grecian mythology he did not attempt to warm up and re-present. He did not attempt again to give us the "Nine," the "tuneful Nine," and "Phœbus' hill" and "Phœbus' rill." Not because he could not understand the spirit of the old Greek mythology. If any of you would fain see a

poetical exemplification of the soul of the old Greek mythology, you must search for it in a beautiful passage in "The Excursion" (which time forbids me to read, but which, to those familiar with the poem, is well known), in which the poet shows that he has done more than merely master the details of the Classic Dictionary, that he has penetrated more into the Greek spirit than editors of the plays were apt to do; but he saw that the gods of a past day were not reproducible now; that too often their very names have degenerated into poetical cant; that "the tuneful Nine" figure on the page where there is little of tunefulness; and that, therefore, it is time to dismiss the pomp and greatness of bygone time. He reversed the usual rule; did away with outward pomp, and on set principle chose lowly exponents of his doctrine, that attention might be centred on the doctrine, and that the power of right feeling and of spiritual truth might be seen in transfiguring that, which would be mean without it. Much of literature is like the creation of the giant monster in "Frankenstein;" the body is made first, and the soul, the vitality, is hunted for afterwards. Not so with this poet. Vital thoughts, spiritual meanings, clothing themselves in natural and appropriate costume, they wear but a thin array of fleshly dress. He has not oppressed the spirit of his writings with cumbrous adornment. I have shown you also Wordsworth's calmness and quietness. No Byronic fever; no melo-dramatic fire; no loud outcry and groaning of a miserable spirit within; no morbid anatomy of his own soul; but a healthy, quiet, calm, leading of us forth into the presence of Nature, and teaching us not to babble, but be quiet; to wait that Nature may teach us, rather than ask impertinent questions which would fail to have an answer, for Nature is not an echo, to repeat any babble that may be uttered to it; Nature can wait, and will wait; and those who would be taught must wait upon it. It is a great teacher, and those who would learn of it must sit at its feet.

These, it appeared to me, were the main principles that wanted illustrating—the philosophy of his choice of subjects and diction; the true understanding of what sort of teaching ought to be expected from Nature, and of what disposition the student of Nature must have. I might go on for hours, touching the peculiar opinions which Wordsworth has advocated or brought forth. I might go would it not weary you—into the whole of

the sonnets ecclesiastical, or into the sonnets in favour of death-punishment. But all Wordsworth's admirers put them aside. They see that they are a lawful localism of a great genius. Wordsworth first writes for the world, as a poet and man, and then writes his little sonnets to show what sort of man he is—that he is an Englishman, a churchman. Turn we to him as poet and man: let him keep his ecclesiastical sonnets, as I would have everyone hold his own peculiar tenets, but thrusting them not upon others. Begin not at the wrong end with Wordsworth, do not start with his specialities and peculiarities, and so unfit yourselves for the contemplation of him as the great priest of Nature, as the great assertor of freedom of humanity, of passiveness, and wise quietness. Let his ecclesiastical sonnets or other localisms define the man as English Churchman, or as man of the nineteenth century, but do not, according to a carping criticism, suffer the remembrance of him as Englishman, or as nineteenth century man, to blind you to the fact that he is a man for all times and all lands, that his name will flow on with increasing glory to the end of time, for his is this peculiarity—that beginning in opposition to his age the ages will continually come nearer and nearer to him.

By expressing what was abstract, then, he will live on; whereas Byron has begun to go down. The star of Byron is setting; that of Wordsworth is rising. Why is this? The one was the mighty voice that uttered the cry of a mighty but temporary disease; Byron's was that mighty tongue that gave utterance to the felt maladies of Europe. Europe was tainted and distressed—disease had gone to its vitals; and his was the mouth through which came its mighty Titanic groans. But men cannot groan for ever. When the pain is gone, the groaning is dismissed, as equally disagreeable with the pain. The groans of Europe are disappearing before a wiser faith and a deeper spiritualism. Dynamical teaching is taking the place of mechanical reform. Byron's greatness belongs to the past, and though his works will be taken down, because they do give the best emblem and poetic expression of the peculiar phases of European history at the time, yet, of necessity, they will be local—they will belong to those only who, in times of darkness and doubt, would therefore seek some "power-man" to groan lustily for them. Byron is, as it were, the

groaning power of humanity, or of individual, single man; but this will be necessarily temporary. We can read Byron, with pleasure, only once in our lives—that is, as a whole; there are passages that will always be true, but the Byronic fever comes over a man only once. Most of us have had our Byronic time, and we are heartily glad to get out of it. It was the time of protest and disgust, when we gathered ourselves up majestically, and fancied ourselves some mighty Manfred, upon our lonely mountain-top of solitariness and grandeur. That day, and its uneasiness, have passed away; and having thus, as by some eruptive feverish attack, ridded ourselves of that “perilous stuff which weighed upon the brain,” we turn with open, longing hands to this calm, wise, cool prophet of humanity; and, having thus cleansed ourselves from what was dark and perilous, we are prepared to receive the pure, the healthy, the wholesome, and the sanitary. The one was a mere negation, striving to protest; the other is a building up in the vacant places, in the waste and howling wilderness which protest has left, of a fair, quiet temple of calm wisdom, of deep feeling, without the fire, and fury, and phantasy of the days of our youth, when scepticism, and darkness, and doubt were upon us. This, then, is Wordsworth’s peculiar position. When our first youthful fancy is over, he will come to us and be beloved.

If any of you, through the mood being upon you which is termed Byronic, love not Wordsworth, I would say to you,—Bide your time; you will be glad of him yet. Let the book lie there; you will want it, if you are worthy to make use of it. The time will come when your soul will have a want, an appetency, which Wordsworth among our poets can only supply. For the poets stand waiting; they should not be read in a hurry, beginning, as some people do, with the beginning, and going through. The characters of the poets should be known for this reason,—that to understand them thoroughly, we should not read them till we want them. Wordsworth will be wanted when vacuity is felt as the first result of loud and long protest. When the fever of youth is beginning to desert us; when the world has played us false a time or two; when we are beginning to care little for people’s praise, and less for their blame; then will the poet, who comes with something positive, calm, and quieting, be wanted,

and be deeply felt to have been sent to fulfil the high mission of making us meditative, calm, thoughtful, quiet, deep-feeling, pious, charitable, and devout men.

I have not time to go into the objections made against Wordsworth, as to his not teaching sufficiently the peculiar doctrines of the Christian faith. His teachings are borrowed from Nature; and when Nature teaches the Apostle's Creed; when Nature has written upon it any creed whatever; when the Ten Commandments are seen blazing in the sky in letters of good Gothic print, then will be the time to accuse Wordsworth of having forgotten his faith, because the poems do not contain a poetic catalogue of articles of doctrine or creeds of faith. He learned of Nature,—he teaches from Nature; and he seeks not so much to *instruct* as to *make* and *mould* us. He has not striven so much to give us knowledge as to give us wisdom; he does not strive to make us men professing this, but men *being* that. His effort is not to give us ready-made professions to utter and quote, but to go behind peculiar differences, and by an appeal to all that is common to every one of us, prepare us the better for seeking manfully, for living reverentially, charitably teaching and insisting upon those after peculiarities of opinion and feeling and sentiment which study and thought may reveal to us as true. Wordsworth prepares the background, upon which each of us may paint his own picture as he will. He gives no picture list of articles of doctrine or of creed. He prepares a canvas, gives us colours, and teaches each to paint for himself, Nature, Faith, Religion, and the World, as they represent themselves to each of us. Wordsworth's teachings come before the peculiarities of a sect; they are appeals to the being; they are not so much teachings of *doing* as of *being*; they are a continual attempt to make us better men, rather than better scholars—an attempt to make the mind healthy, that afterwards it may get knowledge. They are not so much a laying down of peculiar opinions, for us to take up and assert, as of that general healthiness, strength, and power, which each of us can use for the particular life-purposes for which the best circumstances, study, and discipline may incline us to use them.

THE POETRY OF S. T. COLERIDGE.

BORN 1772. DIED 1834. (From 12th Geo. III. to 4th William IV.)

I N lecturing on the poetry of Coleridge, I find greater difficulty than I have previously felt in addressing you on almost any of the subjects which it has been my duty to discuss ; and this on account of the difficulty in the subject, on account of the fragmentary nature of the poems, and especially on account of the remarkable character of the man of which they are but the brief expression. For a more strange and wondrous mind, than that of Coleridge, modern times have not produced ; a man who seems to have set himself the herculean task of combining in himself almost all knowledge ; of laying tributary every source of information, no matter how patent, or how abstruse and remote. It is easy to find fault with Coleridge for this encyclopedic tendency ; and for some of those whose mental constitution inclines them always to move in a lineal measure, those who have no breadth, whose excellence (I cannot call it a great one, though it is an excellent excellence) is to see some point clearly before them, and to march continually and contentedly towards that point ; men narrow, but useful because very narrow ; it is easy for these men to say what Coleridge would have done if he had not been discursive, and if he had been more industrious. Coleridge, in his sadder and wiser moments, was the first to allow that he had lost time, mis-spent opportunities, and wasted many a high occasion, upon which he might have done better. But such criticism may be overdone. Every man, it appears to me, has his peculiar vocation ; if he can make that out, let him manfully adhere to it, whatsoever opinion neighbourly critics may possess as to the particular worth of that mission, or as to how well he would have accomplished some other mission. These minds are not able to measure Coleridge ; few are able to do it ; for fully to understand such a mind, the circle of our own had need be larger. Particu-

larly here, then, do I only essay to give such hints as may throw such light upon these poems, or upon their author, as may afford you merely aid in your own study thereof; for to enter into a thorough and profound criticism of this man, one had need be mightier than he.

I would that it came within the scope of my subject to say something concerning the life of Coleridge, and especially concerning his prose works,—a task which I hope will even yet be given me to attempt; for my opinion of the use, not to say the beauty, of this man's prose writings, is high. Lofty-minded are his writings, in the sense in which I have expounded that term with respect to literature,—showing that *they* are the high-minded and lofty-souled of literature who write for no temporary purpose, and are guided by no temporary laws, but who endeavour to make every part of their literary duty an exponent of some principle which they have searched deeply and found to be true, and to which they manfully adhere.

It is Coleridge's endeavour to reduce everything to its idea. The Platonists would assert that ideas were certain archetypal things; that the idea precedes an existence, and, in accordance with it, the existence comes to be; the ideas existed bodiless, but not the less marked and known for that; and all created things were created in accordance with these primary ideas. We need not adopt the Platonic theory with respect to the works of God. It is perfectly possible that an autocratic, self-existent Being, may find within himself, in laws of his own framing, a sufficient reason or idea for the making of all things; there needing no outer law, no outer idea, in accordance with which creation is to go on. But with respect to all the works of man, be they what they will, there does exist, as Coleridge expresses it, some primary idea. If man could but get the divine idea or vision of these earthly things, the absolute idea would be gained. If he could see how life looks to the Divine Being, how creation looks to God; if he could get a glimpse of how his life looked when set in the light of God's countenance; then should he have gained the idea of his life, the mould and pattern and standard of his life; and, by its conformity or otherwise to that standard, he should be enabled to gauge its worth or worthlessness.

Now, behind all human institutions, there is an idea of what

they should be, what they should do ; and a high-minded literature will be that which continually removes great subjects from the mere outward dress in which the circumstances of life and of the day may have clothed them, and takes them into those high regions of pure thinking and of the abstract ideal. This it was Coleridge's aim to do. He had set himself a herculean and gigantic task. Hear his own words on the subject :—

“ My system, if I may venture to give it so fine a name, is the only attempt, that I know, ever made to reduce all knowledge into harmony. It opposes no other system, but shows what is true in each, and how that which was true in the particular became error because it was only half the truth. I have endeavoured to unite the insulated fragments of truth, and therewith to frame a perfect mirror. I show to each system that I fully understand and rightly appreciate what that system means ; but then I lift up that system to a higher point of view, from which I enable it to see its former position, where it was, indeed, but under another light, and in different relations, so that the fragment of truth is not merely acknowledged but explained.”

After reading such an extract, you will see what I mean when I say that the task which Coleridge set himself was gigantic ; that into his mind was to stream all knowledge, all sectarian history, all party and polemic rule ; and his was the mind that was to take these insulated things, and with rejection, according to the idea, rejection from them of what is false, temporary, and fleeting, to form from them a system, perfect and complete. Remember, that with respect to the past, this is the highest vocation a scholar can set himself ; and there is no philosophy which needs more advocating than this,—the philosophy of wise choosing ; the philosophy which endeavours from all precedent systems to gather such parts of them as were true. I say with respect to past history chiefly, because mere eclecticism, the mere choice between already existing systems, the mere selection out of party and sect of what is true in it, will not make us possessors of the realms of the future. It will enable us to work among the great past, to live upon it, to be supported up to a certain point, by it ; but it will scarcely afford a rule of progress, a law by which to walk in as yet undiscovered realms. This Coleridge set himself to do ; and this, to a great extent, he succeeded in doing.

His knowledge was varied and encyclopedic ; perhaps too varied to enable him to bring that concentration of power upon certain objects, which leaves great and lasting works in the world. His mission, perhaps, was rather to teach an initiate few, who should again become the teachers of a still-widening circle, than at first to address the great public, and to throw his words off-hand, as it were, in such form and shape as they might understand. For remember, there is one spirit, many manifestations. In the Scriptures, it is said that to one, God giveth the gift of prophecy, to another that of miracles, to another that of ministration, and so on ; each rank having a duty to do, not supplied or fulfilled by the rank immediately preceding him. There are men whose duty it is, not to address the public primarily, but to gather around them a small band, to whom they may discourse in not dilute language, but in the high, abstract language that the highest and abstrusest thought may rightfully demand. And say not, according to the common criticism, because a man does address but a few, that, therefore, he does but little. Here the law is this,—the widening circle ; he teaches his band, and they teach the multitude ; the law primarily laid down to them, they,—as it were interpreters between the sage and the people,—do, by virtue of their understanding in part the language of both, make patent and plain to the world at large. We recognise many orders ; we do recognise the esoteric philosopher, whose words are for the few ; and then the interpreter, who, not so great as his master, has yet enough of his spirit to be able to understand the language he speaks, and, on the other hand, as much of the proper spirit, as much knowledge of the common language of mankind, as to safely stand between the sage and the people ; going now to the sage and hearing his winged words, and turning next to the people, and reducing those high words of abstruse knowledge into plainer and more ordinary dialect. Coleridge was scarcely this interpreter ; he was rather the sage and the seer. And (as I have said before), say not that he did little ; for many of the choicest spirits of the day are men trained at his feet, men who took from him his wisdom, and who have been reproducing it in varied forms ever since.

As a talker, he is allowed to have been the first. I have heard many men say what it was to sit an hour or two to hear Coleridge

talk. We know that the men he gathered round him were men of varied minds themselves, men of gigantic intellect. Amongst them we see Edward Irving, sitting, child-like, at the feet of the sage, to be instructed by him. And, remember, Irving is one to whom justice has not yet been done,—a man whose soul was cast in an antique mould; one who (it has been said), in modern times, and in unfavourable times, strove to be a Christian priest: whose aspect reminds us of the Hebrew prophets of old; whose words were those of earnestness and fire, and before whose tongue painted hypocrites shrunk in shame; but who, in the later period of his life, because his imaginative powers gained the mastery, was dismissed as an enthusiastic madman, whose words were not worth listening to. Let us hear what Christopher North says of Coleridge (*An Hour's Talk about Poetry*):—

“Let the dullest clod that ever vegetated, provided only he be alive and hear, be shut up in a room with Coleridge, or in a wood, and subjected for a few minutes to the ethereal influence of that wonderful man's monologue, and he will begin to believe himself a poet. The barren wilderness may not blossom like the rose, but it will seem, or rather feel to do so, under the lustre of an imagination exhaustless as the sun. You may have seen, perhaps, rocks suddenly so glorified by sunlight with colours manifold, that the bees seek them, deluded by the show of flowers. The sun, you know, does not always show his orb even in the day-time—and people are often ignorant of his place in the firmament; but he keeps shining away at his leisure, as you would know were he to suffer eclipse. Perhaps he—the sun—is at no other time a more delightful luminary than when he is pleased to dispense his influence through a general haze or mist—softening all the day, till meridian is almost like the afternoon, and the grove, anticipating gloaming, bursts into ‘dance and minstrelsy’ ere the god go down into the sea. Clouds, too, become him well, whether thin and fleecy and braided, or piled up all round about him castle-wise and cathedral-fashion, to say nothing of temples and other metropolitan structures; nor is it reasonable to find fault with him, when, as naked as the hour he was born, ‘he flames on the forehead of the morning sky.’ The grandeur, too, of his appearance on setting has become quite proverbial. Now in all this he resembles Coleridge. It is easy to talk—not very difficult to

speechify,—hard to speak; but to ‘discourse’ is a gift rarely bestowed by Heaven on mortal man. Coleridge has it in perfection. While he is discoursing, the world loses all its common-places, and you and your wife imagine yourself Adam and Eve, listening to the affable archangel Raphael in the Garden of Eden. You would no more dream of wishing him to be mute for a while, than you would a river that ‘imposes silence with a stilly sound.’ Whether you understand two consecutive sentences, we shall not stop too curiously to enquire; but you do something better, you feel the whole just like any other divine music. And ’tis your own fault if you do not

‘A wiser and a better man arise to-morrow’s morn.’

Reason is said to be one faculty, and imagination another; but there cannot be a grosser mistake; they are one and indivisible; only in most cases they live like cat and dog, in mutual worrying, or haply sue for a divorce; whereas in the case of Coleridge they are one spirit as well as one flesh, and keep billing and cooing in a perpetual honeymoon. Then his mind is learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, as well as the Greeks and Romans; and though we have heard simpletons say that he knows nothing of science, we have heard him on chemistry puzzle Sir Humphrey Davy, and prove to his own entire satisfaction, that Leibnitz and Newton, though good men, were but indifferent astronomers. Besides, he thinks nothing of inventing a new science, with a complete nomenclature, in a twinkling; and, should you seem sluggish of apprehension, he endows you with an additional sense or two, over and above the usual seven, till you are no longer at a loss, be it even to scent the music of fragrance, or to hear the smell of a balmy piece of poetry. All the faculties, both of soul and sense, seem amicably to interchange their functions and their provinces; and you fear not that the dream may dissolve, persuaded that you are in a future state of permanent enjoyment. Nor are we now using any exaggeration; for if you will but think how unutterably dull are all the ordinary sayings and doings of this life, spent as it is with ordinary people, you may imagine how in sweet delirium you may be robbed of yourself by a seraphic tongue that has fed since first it lisped on ‘honeydew,’ and by lips that have ‘breathed the air of Paradise,’ and learned a seraphic language, which, all the while that it is English, is as

grand as Greek and as soft as Italian. We only know this, that Coleridge is the alchymist that in his crucible melts down hours to moments—and lo ! diamonds sprinkled on a plate of gold.”

But, as I have said before, my precise subject forbids me dwelling upon either the man and his strange and varied life, or his strange and varied works. I must, in obedience to my duty, turn now to the poems of Coleridge. A great poem he has not written ; long poems he has not written ; and the first peculiar characteristic I shall indicate, is that Coleridge has represented in poetry certain states of mind, or phases of being, that, either on account of their vague nature, or on account of their seldom coming, other poets have neglected, or perhaps have neglected because of its being as difficult to seize them, and to write them down upon the page, as it would be to seize any of the airy spirits of romance and bend them down to do task-work, as the servants of the house.

Coleridge has been peculiarly successful in reducing, as it were, into fetters of time and place, certain things, in their nature evanescent. There are certain moods lasting but a little while, which cannot be explained by any patent mental philosophy that I am aware of. They are not dignified enough for philosophers, they are not important enough, they are too imaginative, dreamy, mystic, for men whose great province and object it is only to present the “rational” part of our nature. Many of our poets, and especially of our philosophers, have been a great deal too dignified for common-place people like ourselves. The fact is that they are monsters, all head, as we sometimes see represented in caricatures, where all the strength of the body is run away with to make the head gigantically large ; so, by virtue of their “reason,” they are sublimed and raised above these feelings of which I am speaking. Such states which come over us, the beginning of which we cannot exactly put our finger upon, and the end of which we cannot exactly trace out, moods of the mind, are truly fantasies—certain possessions of the spirit of man which he cannot account for by the presence in his mind of any known previous cause. There is always a class which dismisses certain feelings as vague and mystic ; or, if they acknowledge their presence, they look upon them as palpable weaknesses, against which the intellect should be always upon the watch, and for the “putting down” of which the reason ought always to be

sitting upon the bench, ready and able. They are above wondering, they have done with the vague; unless you can show them a plain proposition, with practical bearings, and a good moral and a useful end, they will none of it. These men are more useful than agreeable. I do not like a man with no passion, feeling, enthusiasm, fancy, sentiment, vagaries, or dreams; I do not like these pure intellectual monsters, the men of nothing but logic, Euclid, and propositions, with nothing of imagination in them, with no colouring about them—cold, dry, dead; they are not the men to my taste. I like men and their feelings; I like men to walk with a few “weaknesses” yet about them, for then we can lay our hands in theirs and say, “Here is a brother, here I feel a like warmth with that which is in my own heart.” The other class of men are such as I have indicated—men with weaknesses, if you are pleased so to call them—men not unwilling to surrender themselves to fantasies, and to be easily persuaded, they know not why or how. They are not smitten with that modern malady of accounting for everything. It is an exceedingly good thing to account for everything: it is well to account for the rising of the sun, it is well to account for the going down of the same; but verily I would rather be able to account for neither than that the ability to account for them should take away the mystic glory of the rising sun, or that strange and balmy influence of the setting sun. What Arnold says about other matters I would say about this: I would rather have my sons ignorant of science; I would rather they should think the sun went round the earth, and that the earth stood still, than that I should have them men so merely scientific as to be unable to take interest in the great questions of humanity, in those great questions of passion, enthusiasm, fancy, and feeling by which we are surrounded. I know how to reverence science—you will not suspect me of putting any slight upon it—but I do say that science has withdrawn too many away into a cold-blooded seclusion from the life and interests of the fellow-sinners by whom they are surrounded. Those of whom I am speaking are not smitten with the mania of accounting for things; they do not refuse to believe anything that they cannot account for, they have no *à priori* rules that there could not be, and should not be, any such things as spectres and apparitions; they do not settle beforehand that Mesmerism is a farce, that all sympathy of

soul with soul, except through some good patent medium, which they can touch, or look at, or pull about, is an idle dream; they are not the men who have made up their minds to deny all these things. I have sufficiently indicated these two classes of men; right and left you can find specimens of either. Look at them, touch them, turn them round, and say which you think is the more amiable and more truly philosophic.

Now this, as it appears to me, is the peculiar vocation of Coleridge's poetry. It recognises certain states or phases of being that cannot be very easily accounted for; such, for instance, as the "lapping the soul in Elysium" from music; you cannot particularly account for it, though you may have a philosophic theory upon the effect of sound upon the auditory nerves. We shall have had one of Beethoven's symphonies played to us, and almost before the sounds have ceased our philosopher will get up and open his sermon upon the effect of music upon the auditory nerves; what are the effects of the vibrations of the piano-strings and those of the air; and account for the peculiar effects which some of us sensitive to music do feel.

These philosophers, again, do not recognise that peculiar, somewhat dreamy kind of state into which we are sometimes brought by communing with Nature. There are times when we reach that wise passiveness that Wordsworth speaks of; when we are content to lie upon the bosom of nature, and be carried with it, and breathe along with it, and be pleased with it, and be improved by it, without "accounting" for it. We do not enter into nice and elaborate medical calculations of what fresh air does for a man. No, we have done with those things; we have left "accounting" at home in the study, and we have come out simply—to *be*; and being is above thinking and doing. To be—to be aright—to be in harmony with nature; to feel that between it and its blessed influences upon ourselves there is no gulf, no alienship, no want of harmony,—this is the perfection, not of happiness, but of true blessedness.

There is also another class of these things,—very unphilosophical, I admit,—which Coleridge has noted for us. You shall sit round the fire at Christmas-time, good men and true every one of you; you shall come there armed with your patent philosophy; that creak you have heard, it is only the door—the list is not

carefully put round the door, and it is the wintry wind that whistles through the crevices. Ghosts and spectres belong to the olden times; science has waved its wand and laid them all. We have no superstition about us; we walk enlightened nineteenth century men; it is quite beneath us to be superstitious. As Carlyle says, we have caught the great sphinx that set the riddle of the world, and torn off his stuffed hide; and there is now nothing wonderful in anything. We have done with wonder; it belongs to the early ages of the world, to the dark ages, to the times when popular education was not. By-and-bye, one begins to tell tales of ghosts and spirits; and another begins, and it goes all round; and there comes over you a curious feeling—a very unphilosophical feeling, in fact, because the pulsations of air from the tongue of the story-teller ought not to bring over you that peculiar feeling. You have only heard words, tales—confessed by the story-teller himself to be only a tale, such as may figure in the next monthly magazine for pure entertainment and amusement. But why do you feel so, then? If you say that these things are mere hallucinations, vague air-beating or tale-telling, why, good philosopher, do you feel so curious, so all-overish, as it were? Again, you are a man without the least terror in you, as brave and bold a man as ever stepped: living man cannot frighten you, and verily the dead rise not with you. But you are brought, towards midnight, to the stile over which is gained a view of the village churchyard, where sleep the dead in quietness. Your manhood begins just to ooze away a little; you are caught occasionally whistling to keep your courage up; you do not expect to see a ghost, but you are very ready to see one, or to make one; the white cow, peacefully grazing, or the old pollard willow stretching out its arms, needs but a little of the subjective magic, a little of the enchantment that dwells in us, speedily to become the sheeted ghost or the frowning spectral form. *Why* is that? Account for it, if you please: tell us what is the feeling? However, there is the feeling; and the poet has seen that it being a feeling, a real feeling, it should find its representative in art.

For I look upon it as an undeniable canon, that every feeling that ever did or does exist in large classes of men,—nay, even in a single mind,—must be, sooner or later, reproduced in art; for it

is the province of art to reproduce, according to its laws, and for particular purposes, all the foregone things of man ; the feelings, forms, sentiments,—the appearances of nature and the doings of historic life. Here is Coleridge's peculiar mission as the artist,—to give them a place on the page ; to, as it were, catch such "airy nothings," and bind them syllably down ; to make them become manacled by words ; to make them, as it were, so live in this book, that, by their very objective being, they should produce in you those strange subjective feelings which first gave them birth. See the history of such a poem, for instance, as "The Ancient Mariner." There is, as it were, a good back-ground of superstitiousness (I will call it so, to please you) in us all ; a certain amount of floating capital for the ghost-seer to build upon, in us all. We all give him a little ; we are excitable to a certain degree ; all superstitious to a certain degree. Now, the presence and existence of these feelings in the minds of men summons up, on the part of the artist, a world of superstition, of unreal beings, of romantic life. The "ghosts" of the Middle Ages are the objective, the exterior, formal outside representations, of all these strange, dreamy, inward, subjective feelings of man. Had we not been able to feel a ghost, art or nursery legend never would have created a ghost. It appears to me that this principle of art must be well understood,—that no outward thing can be found, except it be an exponent of some inward verity. I am leaving out of view the lower branch of art,—the Dutch school of art. I do not say, that for a man to paint an onion, he must have felt a sensibility peculiar to the onion in him. An onion, painted by a Dutch painter, is just the portrait of an onion, and nothing more. But when we go into high art, into the æsthetic and the imaginative branch of art, the artist cannot, by any power, whatsoever, make or create a form that had not the call for its creation, previously, in the soul or feelings of the man. The Ariel of Shakespeare had not been, but that man had felt Arielish, so to speak. Caliban had not come, had not each one of us, or at least many of us, a portion, as it were, of Calibanism in him. The Caliban or Ariel of the objective poetic world, is the form in which the poet, by his high art, has bound the subjective vague feelings of the human mind. Ariel stands there for future ages the symbol of certain feelings of the human mind. It is the same with the nursery

legends,—those books which modern education has unwisely shut out and excluded; those wondrous old legends that do more for us than any “philosophy made easy.” These books are all obedient to such a law; and here I am supported by the testimony of great man after great man,—that I would rather have parted with many of my spelling-books, than give up the tale of Cinderella, or that of wondrous Jack, the great giant-slayer of old. So far, then, have we advanced, as to see that these creations of the poet and the artist, are results of foregone conclusions in the mind.

The next process is to see how they react. First, the soul of man, with certain feelings; then the poet, with certain creations, those creations owing their being to the feelings in the mind. For these creations of the poet are to the fluent spirit that created them what the ice is to the water, a bonding and a binding of it—they have gained what they had not before. These vague feelings which in men’s minds are fluent, not subject to any material laws, when they come upon the page of the poet or artist, lose somewhat of their fluency, and come to be constricted in the bonds of time and space. They have passed out of being pure spirit into being body and spirit. These feelings, in the poet’s page get them a body, they become flesh, they are, as it were, put into being, and then comes their afterwork. First the feeling, then the poet, then the creation of the poet, because of the existent feeling, and then the summoning of the feelings again through the ministry of the symbols created by them. Have I made this clear? First, there are within us certain vague and misty feelings which we cannot yet, in the present state of science, account for; that it is the mission of the poet, the artist, to give them a form and body, so that we can look at them. Such Shakespeare has done in his fairy world. He has caught, as it were, a fairy, and there it is; you can open the book and inspect it at your leisure, he has museumed it, so that all future ages shall be able to look upon it. But he has not put it there merely for a raree-show, he has not set it there merely for fools to stare at, or for critics to comment upon, but that it may call back that feeling of which it is but a symbol, and but for which it never had been. Remarkably has Coleridge done this. Certain feelings, which he understood so well, produced “*The Ancient Mariner*,” and then

“The Ancient Mariner” produces at will those feelings. For I defy any man of imagination or sensibility to have it read to him, by the flickering firelight on Christmas night, by a master mind possessed by the mystic spirit of the poem, and not find himself taken away from the good regions of “ability to account for,” and taken into some far-off dream-land, and made even to start at his own foot-fall, and almost to shudder at his own shadow.

People may say, “What is the use of all this? What good utilitarian purpose can all this be turned to?” I would say that the man who asks that question is just the man we must decline answering. A man asks, “What is the use of music?” I never answer that man. The *use of music!* I could discourse to him on the use of bacon; I could tell of the use of geography; I could, in my humble measure, tell him of the use of chemistry; but the use of music! That man will ask us next, “What is the use of the smell of the rose?” or, “What use is there in birds singing?” He is the man who will enter into a long disquisition upon the probable uses of the song of the nightingale. And he will be reduced to a puzzle by it, too, for that said nightingale begins to sing at unseemly hours, she is apt to keep men out of doors on chilly evenings, from which they are led to take cold. Such a man is one of those of whom Richter says, they like nightingales, but *roasted*; and myrtles, in the same way that the Spanish bakers do—to light their ovens with. Never trouble yourselves to explain uses to these men, they are of *no* use to *them*. Music, the smell of the rose, the songs of birds, have no uses; nightingales, for aught I know, have no use, except just simply to be nightingales. Such things have no end or beginning, they are mere ecstasies of being, circles, whirlpools. Grant at once that they have no use, and so have done with the utilitarian school. This is a way of ending many debates, for there are certain men as to whom it is best always to allow them everything they ask for. If they say “Music is useless,” say, “Granted;” and, just when they are beginning to crow in their pride, say, “What then?”

Having safely got rid of that sort of utilitarian school, we may yet inquire what is the use of this vagueness, this mysticness of our nature? Why should the poet give them body and form? Why should he strive to reproduce and recreate them? It does

appear to me that there is a high and holy end which these things serve. They keep us and our sensibilities alive to another world than our own. They are like a sense of the soul, which brings us into communion, mystic and dim, but real, with the spirit of the past and the spirit world that surrounds us. For many of us do believe that the world we see is not the only world we may know ; that not what can be measured out by rule, or looked at through spectacles, is all that has being ; but that there are certain things that reveal themselves to us in the mode in which the ancients deemed they did, when they held that the involuntary shudder of the body was caused by the tread of an unhallowed foot upon our grave yet to be,—these things which lead men to believe that the soul here, and there, can yet hold soul-communion ; that, as in the dream of the night, the spirit can transcend the body and be without it for a time. It does appear to me that these strange and vague feelings are instruments to keep alive within us our faith in the unseen and spiritual world. I do not say that they are arguments for an unseen world. Many of us are thankful that we want few arguments about it ; and we give thanks that we want few arguments about the immortality of the soul, spiritualism, and the life everlasting. We are content to feel it, and to hold it when we have been argued out of it. We are content to be obstinate about such things,—to let people argue it patiently and demonstratively that there is no such thing, and yet, when they have gone, to be as firm in the faith as before ; because there are instincts within us that lean toward such things,—strange prophetic questionings of another world,—instincts that have not their origin in propositions, and which do not find their result in demonstrations ; that we are finely attuned to an invisible world ; that these feelings, vague and mystic, fan the flame of faith, and keep it alive amid the conflicting words of many doctrines, *pro* and *con*, with which philosophers or others may assail it. For the flame of faith needs an inward feeding : blown upon here by the chill breath of scepticism ; and there, by the hot and exhausting breath of fanaticism, bigotry, and superstition, the flame of faith needs to have an upward motion from its own inward generation ; though it may for a moment go northward and then southward, because the wind has changed, yet to be continually upspringing, and thus be enabled to defy the assaults of cold unbelief and of

that suffocating simoon, superstition, bigotry, and want of thought.

But I am forgetting the poet. Confessedly, however, with the works of Coleridge before us, it is lawful to go into dreamland. I will begin with that beautiful sonnet in which he has bodied down for us a mood, which will not be admired by those good industrious people who think man is never doing his duty if he is not working at something which he can hold up to be looked at, which he can put down on the counter and say, "Here is my work; pay me my wages." Though it will not be admired by such people, it is right beautiful.

· FANCY IN NUBIBUS ;
OR, THE POET IN THE CLOUDS.

O ! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlit skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy ; or with head bent low
And check aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twi'x crimson banks ; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through CLOUDLAND, gorgeous land !
Or list'ning to the tide, with closèd sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light
Beheld the ILIAD and the ODYSSEE
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

There is nothing more beautiful than this in English poetry. It is an example of what I have been telling you about. What is the *use* of a man's writing of how one looks at the clouds after sunset ; of a man's half-closing his eyes and travelling through cloud-land ; or sitting with his eyes shut at the sea-side, that he may fancy himself the blind bard ? There is no use in it, but it is there. It comes not of man's making. It is an attuning, granted by the Creator, between the glories of nature and the powers of the soul. It is a beautiful harmony of the many-stringed Æolian harp of man with the winds and airs which God has caused to breathe through nature. It is too holy and beautiful

to have stupid questions asked about its *use*. It is there for refreshment. It is there, when tired with propositions, to lose ourselves in being, to refresh us from reasoning, and to bring us back strong men, by its being something of a sleep, a thing that we know has happened afterwards when we come to think of it, but of which during its blessed trance we are blessedly ignorant. I shall afterwards have to point out other examples, especially when I come to comment on "The Ancient Mariner." Coleridge holds the first place among English poets, in this objective teaching of the vague, the mystic, the dreamy, and the imaginative. He was also eminently successful in reducing to the objective form certain single states of the mind. He took a single phase of the mind, made it isolated, and put it down like an anatomical specimen, that we might be the better able to examine it. For with respect to the human body, the skeleton, as a whole, can be only looked upon generally, but to understand it thoroughly, bone must be taken from bone, and each subjected to a thorough examination. A wise metaphysician does not murder in order to dissect, but dissects in order the better to understand the mind of man. To-day will be laid upon his table hope, to-morrow fear, joy, agony, conscience, and pain; that each of them, by this solitary manipulation, may be the better fitted into the complete whole. If a man looks upon the human mind as a bundle of different properties, one of which may be, and the other not be, and so on, he commits an error; he has murdered for the sake of dissecting; but the wise anatomist dissects that he may, by a thorough knowledge of the parts, gain the only complete knowledge of the whole. In poetry, Coleridge has done this; he was, as it were, a skilful anatomist of the parts of the human mind. He lays a passion bare before us, isolates it, segregates it from its fellows; he gives us to-day joy, to-morrow hope; he turns them round, knows them, classifies them thoroughly, and is enabled exactly to place them aright, and so to constitute that wonderful whole, the soul, spirit and body of a man. An extract which I will read to you, and which is called "Youth and Age," will explain this last of Coleridge's peculiarities. It represents certain evanescent feelings common to most of us.

YOUTH AND AGE.

VERSE, a Breeze 'mid blossoms straying,
 Where HOPE clung feeding, like a bee —
 Both were mine ! Life went a maying
 With NATURE, HOPE, and POESY,
 When I was young !
When I was young ? Ah, woeful WHEN !
 Ah for the Change 'twixt Now and Then !
 This breathing House not built with hands,
 This body that does me grievous wrong,
 O'er aery Cliffs and glittering Sands,
 How lightly *then* it flashed along :—
 Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
 On winding Lakes and Rivers wide,
 That ask no aid of Sail or Oar,
 That fear no spite of Wind or Tide !
 Naught cared this Body for wind or weather
 When YOUTH and I liv'd in't together.

FLOWERS are lovely ; LOVE is flower-like ;
 FRIENDSHIP is a sheltering tree ;
 O the joys, that came down shower-like,
 Of FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, and LIBERTY,
 Ere I was old !

Ere I was old ? Ah woeful ERE,
 Which tells me, YOUTH'S no longer here !
 O YOUTH ! for years so many and sweet,
 'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
 I'll think it but a fond conceit—
 It cannot be that Thou art gone !
 Thy Vesper bell hath not yet toll'd :—
 And thou wert aye a Master bold !
 What strange disguise hast now put on,
 To *make believe* that thou art gone ?
 I see these Locks in silvery slips,
 This drooping Gait, this altered Size :
 But SPRINGTIDE blossoms on thy Lips,
 And Tears take sunshine from thine eyes !
 Life is but Thought : so think I will
 That YOUTH and I are House-mates still.

Thus, as I have said, certain feelings of the mind, vague and indistinct, and the cause of which we cannot very definitely lay

down, are expressed in the poems of Coleridge, and receive there their outward embodiment. For it appears to be a rule of art, that whatsoever is true of a mind, and especially of a large class of minds, should receive by the artist an outward embodiment ; so that the feelings which gave it birth may be reproduced.

II.

In English literary history there is a peculiarity which has been noticed by a recent writer, that in the time of Bacon, and Jeremy Taylor, and others, there was a beautiful union of powers and gifts in the authors. That the scientific man was then the poet ; that the divine was no crabbed theologian only, but knew how to steep his theology and divinity in the rarest dyes of poesy and imagination, and to strengthen the whole by sense and by learning the furthest off and most abstruse. If any man would see an example of this, he must read the works of Jeremy Taylor, in which we have eloquence and poetry of the rarest order, coupled with strength of reasoning, force of logic, and abstruse learning seldom met with in modern times in one man. There were few of the philosophers of that day who were not also poets, and few of the poets who were not also philosophers. There came a divorce in English literature, however : imagination and science parted company, and the result was, in the last century, a race of men who had only one or more parts of this compound nature. Take, for instance, Locke. With all his excellence, he was defective, partial ;—he had no poesy or imagination in him ; and oftentimes, the poet of that day was as destitute of the metaphysical element. Such men are common even yet ; men all head, all logic, proposition, demonstration, and conclusion ; no fancy, no imagination ; men who think all poetics waste of time, unprofitable stuff ; who look, like some political economists, upon the poet as a sort of unproducing animal, which consumes, and which it is doubtful whether or not the State ought to encourage. That time passed away, and brought us to modern times, in which we see the rare old union again ; for we have men living amongst us who strangely combine the powers of the metaphysician with the imagination and the fancy of the poet ; and chief of the men of this century who have so done is Coleridge,—one of the rarest

combinations of the metaphysician and poet the world has known. This is shown in his poetry ; for there he combines two classes of poetry that had been distinct previously. He was both metaphysician and poet : yet sometimes poet without being metaphysician, and sometimes metaphysician without being poet. There are certain poems of Coleridge's which answer to the old meaning of poetry, when it was looked upon as an inspiration or possession. The time was when the poet was looked upon as forced to speak, when he could not help but speak ; and the poetry which will always be most popular with man, is that when the poet seems so possessed with his subject. It was said of some of the old prophets that they resisted the spirit of prophecy, but they were forced to yield to it. So with the poetry most moving to the people, the poet will be forced to speak, whether his will is there or not. It is a bubbling up of a spirit within the man. Wordsworth had little of that characteristic about him. He seldom spoke as if possessed ; but rather wrote as a man recording past inspiration or possession. Byron wrote as if possessed. What sort of demon he was possessed with is another question ; but, certes, many of his poems appear a pouring forth simply because the demon has so thoroughly mastered him. I might compare the two classes thus :—The one stands like a priest of old to take down the words of the Pythoness, whereas the other mounts the tripod, and becomes the mouthpiece through which the inspiration gains its utterance to man. This points out the division of almost all our poets, into those who play the part of the Pythoness themselves, or those who are merely ministering priests, to write down the words of others, or to record a past possession. But both of these are found in Coleridge. There are poems of his which seem to be utterances, simply because he could not avoid it ; like the speech of man under the influence of a strong passion, eloquent, not through study, but through the fulness of the spirit, and the power which the spirit has when it is in its full, to overcome obstruction, and which seems to give man a faculty and force he otherwise has not. I have heard that the Germans usually do not like the poetry of Wordsworth, because, I presume, they take the theory of poetry, which regards it as an irresistible impulse, as an utterance, not of set theory, but of passion. Wordsworth, writing his poems in obedience to theory,

may appear to them rather to *build up* a lofty rhyme, than to utter the fulness and depth of his passion.

In the poems of Coleridge, he notes down, and he utters. Many of his poems are nothing but an utterance. They come simply because the feeling in him was so full; and there are, so far as I know, no "uses" in many of his poems. He says himself:—

"Mrs Barbauld once told me that she admired 'The Ancient Mariner' very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that, in my own judgment, the poem had too much, and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader, as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genii starts up, and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant, *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genii's son."

Thus we see the difference of opinion between Coleridge and Mrs Barbauld on the subject of "The Ancient Mariner." There is a moral in "The Ancient Mariner;" Coleridge says it is too obtrusive, and probably it is; because it obtrudes itself into a region where we do not want a moral. It is an objective rendering of the phases and feelings of the human mind: it is a most masterly delineation of that great passion of remorse which Coleridge has drawn at greater length in his drama. There is a beauty about the vagueness of "The Ancient Mariner." Some have said how strange and vast is the tale to build upon the simple killing of a bird. Therein is seen how a little sin will generate huge remorse. He would have shown himself a less skilled man, and to know far less about the human mind and its passions, had the great remorse only sprung from a great crime. But he knew too well what remorse is. In his prose he had written it too often. Painful knowledge it was, but he knew that a little crime will, by the power of the conscience and the mind, raise up a haunting spirit that shall be with us even until death. His moral he thought too obtrusive, and so vindicated that class

of knowledge of which I have been speaking, which has no end but simply to be, and which there is no more need of accounting for than good health, good spirits, laughter, or weeping. The cry made about the moral and the use of such poems is very similar to what all have sometimes seen. A child is thumped, and it cries. Some sapient person says, "It is no use to cry; it will do you no good." Who thought it would? The crying does not come to do good, but it is the natural result of a feeling. Many do not laugh to do good. They are not smitten with any impulses, passions, and feelings thus. The child cries in fulfilment of a law of nature, that an inward feeling should struggle towards an outward birth. Life and nature are made up of this, a continual struggle of the invisible to body itself in the visible; a continual effort on the part of the unseen to make itself a symbol in the visible and seen. The crying comes that there may be a presence in both worlds; that in the world of the spirit grief may be, and in the world of matter sound expressive of the grief may be. A dualism must be in these things. The feeling must exist in the mind, and have expression. So with such poems: the spirit of them is in humanity, the law of them is in the soul, and the poet gives to them tongue and utterance. All the feelings in "The Ancient Mariner" are in humanity; the poet summons up that strange weird being, and so gives outward expression to the inward feelings of humanity, and then comes the after action of that outward expression to summon up those very feelings in the mind from which it gained its origin and birth. Coleridge was a metaphysician in his poetry; not that he, like Lucretius of old, put a system of metaphysics into verse. I do not say that any one will, by any process of distillation, get a system of metaphysics out of the poetry of Coleridge. Poetry is not the place for a scientific rendering of metaphysics; but yet there may be a mode of teaching them, in which the poem is only the outward expression of a deep metaphysical feeling. How beautifully he illustrates most of the grand passions of humanity; taking a single passion, as it were, and isolating it, letting us look at it by itself, and only for the purpose of afterwards completing the full man. Take such a feeling as that of dejection, and see how it has been rendered in those words (unsurpassable in any poetry), commencing, "A grief without a pang."

“ A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo’d,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green :
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye !
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars ;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen :
Yon crescent moon as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel how beautiful they are !

“ My genial spirits fail,
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west ;
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.”

The same thing has also been done by Coleridge for the passion of love, which in few and simple lines he has painted :

“ All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o’er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.”

and if any of you want a poetic exercise, you may take some of the mediæval age of English poetry, and compare them with those lines, not anatomising the passion, or cause of the passion, but

just the simple uttering of a man who was so full thereof that he must tell his tale. The iteration in poems of the beauties of eyes and so forth, until it becomes looked upon more like a catalogue of external beauties, than the expression of a man full of true feeling, presents a woeful contrast to these simple and beautiful lines. The love found in Byron's poems is a mixture of sensualism and sentimentalism; the passion of the animal, with the refinement of the poet superadded; an attempt to put poetic colouring over the lower form of the passion of love. It is fire offered on the altar of a false god—an attempt to light up the altar, not of the true Greek Cupid, but of the *Ἄντιρος*, which was known of the ancients to be an enemy rather than a friend to the true *ἔρος*, or love. I will now read you the whole of the exquisitely beautiful poem of "Genevieve."

"Maid of my Love, sweet GENEVIEVE!
 In Beauty's light you glide along:
 Your eye is like the star of eve,
 And sweet your voice, as Seraph's song.
 Yet not your heavenly Beauty gives
 This heart with passion soft to glow:
 Within your soul a VOICE there lives!
 It bids you hear the tale of Woe.
 When sinking low the sufferer wan
 Beholds no hand outstretcht to save,
 Fair, as the bosom of the swan
 That rises graceful o'er the wave,
 I've seen your breast with pity heave,
 And, *therefore*, love I you, sweet GENEVIEVE!"

These extracts might be greatly multiplied, each of them a perfect gem, and the result of the full possession of the mind of the poet of the particular feeling which he was instancing.

I will now pass on to that remarkable part of his poetry which must be pronounced to be the result of what Coleridge very much was—a dreamer. No one will suspect me of using the word "dreamer" in an obnoxious or abusive sense. Some of the greatest men the world ever had were dreamers; and old John Bunyan has made dreaming too beautiful for any wise and thoughtful man to sneer at it, as if it were a waste of time, or an unhealthy and unnatural exercise of the soul. I use the word in

the sense of those men who have surrendered themselves to their own spirits, and have given to us as the result, the phases, the changes, and the feelings of their inward being. For this is, as it were, the spirit's dreaming, and the laws of such dreams as these must be very like the laws of dreams with which all are familiar, which often pass away from the rules of logic, and which are sometimes so strangely involved that a man dreams he is dreaming. Now there is a waking dreaming, transcending the usual laws of thought and logic, as does the nightly dreaming transcend the customary rules of thinking. It begins in meditation, that particular temper of the mind which so few know how to distinguish from thought, or attention to study : for meditation is neither of these. It is like throwing the reins on the horse's neck to let him go where he will. By no logic-rein does it strive to keep the mind in. By no whip or spur of an end to be gained, a utility to be served, does it strive to goad on or restrain the spirit. But it is a surrendering ourselves to ourselves, a suffering the mind to do as it will, and to be "easily persuaded" by whatsoever feeling may come across it. For I believe there is a weather of the soul, the laws of which are about as little understood as are the laws of our own atmosphere. There are purposes of the mind, directions of the intellect, operations and studies of the mind, which can be made to attend at pleasure, and to come to an end at pleasure ; but beyond that there is a certain atmosphere or weather of the soul, which does not come at our bidding, but by laws we have not yet made out. It is rather a mode of being, than a particular state of doing. It goes beyond this. This supplies but the atmosphere, and this peculiar background is drawn upon certain imaginings, certain fancies or visions, which are not amenable to the ordinary laws of logical reasoning. The man is possessed by imaginings ; he sees strange sights which others do not see ; and, by very virtue of these sights not being visible to others, not being amenable to the laws of intellect, the whole phase of being may be pronounced to be a dreaming. It is rather something done in us than by us ; something to which we are obliged to surrender ourselves, rather than something which we bring into us to work out a stated end. But I cannot define this matter. To those who know not by a mere hint what this dreaming is, I am hopeless of explaining it by any lengthened

speech. Certain it is that Coleridge was a dreamer ; that he was possessed by these strange feelings, things that are not answerable to the usual law ; and his poems present us the most beautiful picturings of the waking day-dreams of an imaginative spirit that literature possesses. Take "The Ancient Mariner" again. What a strange and weird dream is that ! How perfectly original is that mariner ; how unborrowed is the whole thing from any previous source ! "A nameless ship, with a nameless crew ;" an albatross winging its way across the lone heavens ; a freak of mind inclining the mariner to shoot the bird ; a spirit, the friend of the bird, which haunts him ; and those two strange figures upon the deck, dicing, as it were, for a human soul ; then the ship, "as quiet as a painted ship upon a painted ocean ;" and the impulse of this strange being to travel the world over, and seize on some one to hear his tale to an end. Make what you will of it, and it remains a dream. And who can say by what law it was that "The Ancient Mariner" rose in such a strange bodily being, before the mind's eye of the poet ! For we can scarcely imagine that this was a thing of mosaic, of purposing, and contrivance, the result of manufacture. It is no snow man, made by continually piling up. But we can scarcely help thinking this ancient mariner rose up before him, without asking leave, coming when it would, and departing according to its own rule, merely asking from us that we should give it a temporary habitation, and a fit audience of its mystic utterings. In this class of literature, the expression in the outward of the mystic and more supernatural feelings of the human mind, "The Ancient Mariner" stands pre-eminent ; it is one of those unfinished fragments the law of which we do not understand. It obeys the usual inclination of Coleridge's mind, to be fragmentary, — for, unfortunately, Coleridge has finished nothing. A recent critic said this was the age of fragments,—the age of great beginnings and small conclusions : and many of the most remarkable poems and other works of this century are unfinished. All Coleridge's poems are beautiful snatches, fragments. A curious problem would be to ascertain whether the characters of our age supply a reason for this ; to ascertain what there is in the character of the minds of the men of to-day, in the temper or circumstances of the age, to cause the fragmentary appearance of the works of some

of the greatest poets and writers. "The Ancient Mariner" most of you are familiar with, and it has held you intensely, whether you would or not, until its weird tale was told out. The results of such a poem justify its being, explain its meaning, and give its laws. If any of you wish to know why it is, what it is, and what it has to do, you must read it quietly, or have it read quietly to you, at night-time. The chances are you will be spell-bound; there will be a strange, creeping kind of feeling over you, you will almost look around to see whether or not the spirit world has become manifest; or there will be a shrinking, a strange chill of the blood, a listening at the next door creaking, to see what will come of it. If it does this, you know all that can be said in explanation of the poem. The question, then, will be removed from the poem to the feelings themselves, and then a fruitful source of thought will be to find why we have such strange feelings within us. What *is* it that makes a man, in spite of all his philosophy, still a supernaturalist? Such feelings serve, probably, to keep alive in us that veneration and wonder without which the study of nature, of providence, and of God, is almost hopeless. Those familiar with the works of Carlyle will remember how this ability to wonder, and this state of veneration, are insisted upon as necessary conditions in the study of nature. For nature and life, having their roots in mystery, in the infinite, can only be studied by such minds as feel veneration, and have not lost the ability to wonder. Were there, then, no other purpose served by such poems, and the feelings which they generate, than that of just keeping wonder alive in us, they would do well; for a defect it always is in education, when, through any pretence of being scientific, of having philosophy made easy, or of being delivered from superstition, of being wiser than our forefathers, of being the educators of an enlightened nineteenth century, of being the result of utilitarianism, whether through these or any other causes, an education which neglects and lessens the wonder-power of the human mind, is a mischievous education. As I said before, many great men have asserted that the nursery tales did more for them than all the "science made easy" which was inflicted upon them; that the wonderful tales of the giganticide of old, of the German mythology, and our own rich nursery lore, were of more use to them, did more to make

them what they were, poets, seers, and interpreters of nature, than did "mathematics made easy," or any patent science catechism whatever. What is the result of the two different classes of education? As far as I have noticed it—but I may be wrong—a child brought up with no culture of the wonderful, whose imagination is rather repressed than fostered, comes out at last a hard, dry, cold, frigid, narrowed intellect; a mere logician, a person never content only to enjoy, but pestered with a great desire to "account for;" who not only would be happy, but must account for it; who would almost refuse to be happy, except he could account for it. And it makes oftentimes a pedantic and unruly spirit, a spirit which will have no faith; which must have sight; that demands to be able to touch and smell everything it is to believe; that will not transcend such little bounds as its own philosophy can give. Such have been the results of an education which neglected the wonder-power of man, which failed to cultivate the imagination, and which, under wise pretence, put down as levity or waste of time the tales of our youth, and the wondrous history in which at first we so faithfully believed. It is wrong, because it is against what is visible to all,—that imagination is the strongest faculty in a child. What are all our discussions about the drama and romance? Sit down and watch the child in a corner, and see the drama it creates between itself and its doll. The child will hold up the doll; the doll now will speak, and now the child; and thus a dialogue and drama, with two or three scenes and acts, will go on with such small machinery as one child and one doll. The child is dramatic, of course, because we have settled that the drama is useful, or that it is an allowable form of expression; of course the child has studied all our philosophical disquisitions on the matter. Verily, no! The drama came because the child was dramatic, and not because we have settled some law about the drama. The child was an actor before there came playwrights, and is not an actor because plays are written. So with imagination. How a few chairs will make the child a castle; and how some few slices of apple will make the child a banquet with which to feast all its friends. There is in imagination, weird power, magic; there is in germ and *in pectto*, magic, wonder-working, creative power, vision, and faculty. The poets came

at the bidding of this, and not this at the bidding of our poems.

It is not beneath us, then, to learn a lesson therefrom ; to see that as we have not the ordering of this, we must be content to be ordered by it. We did not settle what faculty should be pre-eminent in the mind of a child ; probably if we had, we should have made it a logical or enlightened one ; one that would have maintained that apple-slices were apple-slices, and not a feast ; that the doll was wax, and not a living being. The child would not have stated that the doll did sleep, that she saw it sleep, and that she helped to awake it. Had we had our own will, the wax doll would have been a wax doll, and the child would have been a nice little nineteenth-century child, and would have believed in no such fancies whatever. But as it is not of our making, we must be content to be made thereby. These feelings originated the laws of such literature, and to thoughtful men they are a sufficient reason for the matter. The wonder-power, therefore, being in the child, imagination being its foremost and first power, that is a mistaken education which leaves them out of the question, strives to cramp them, or which would negative them in their exercise. They are there, and they are there for a reason ; they are not put there, like a man's beard, to give the man the trouble of shaving it off, according to the modern European practice. They are there as the first buddings of the feeling of the wonderful, of the feelings which help to keep alive, and to keep warm, faith. The other education wisely cultures them. It is not wiser than the maker of the child ; it does not presume to say fiction is wicked and wrong, because it sees the child make fictions from the beginning ; it does not make confusion between the modern stage and the principles of the drama ; it does not make a confusion between an ill-managed theatre and the principles of dramatic representation. It cultures the wonderful, puts it, as all powers must be, under due subordination, but does not seek to remove it. What is the consequence with such a mind ? Those so trained are generally the warm and full of faith ; able to wonder, able to be children up to their dying day ; carrying the boy's heart far away into advanced life, generally to the last ; men who do not ask sight in all cases, but who are content sometimes to walk by faith in the invisible and unseen.

Such poems, then, have great use and meaning. They keep alive the old feelings of imagination and wonder. I would not have all the wonder taken out of the world; and if it were, then I fly to the poets, the dramatists, and the painters, that I may find an ark of refuge there. One of the first operations, though but a temporary one, of science, is to take the wonder out. How pathetically has one of our poets lamented over it, when he tells us that there was once an awful bow in heaven, and goes on to say how philosophers have told us its woof and texture. There are three states in this matter:—First, wonder, from ignorance; second, no wonder, from shallowness; and third, all wonder, from depth and profoundness. Think on about science, and wonder will come back. In olden times, the planets were wonderful things, men knowing little about them; in the middle state, they are not wonderful, because Newton and others have told us their weight; but think on deeper, and in the very fact that we can know their weight, and see their vastness and the beautiful regularity with which they move, we may again find cause for mute astonishment.

In obedience to the usual critical law, I ought to indicate some faults in my poet. There are some, doubtless. But I would prefer that he should indicate them himself. There are three sonnets which I will read from the "Biographia,"* in which he has pointed out the sins of his own poetry.

SONNET I.

Pensive at eve, on the hard world I mused,
 And my poor heart was sad; so at the moon
 I gazed and sighed, and sighed. for ah how soon
 Eve saddens into night! mine eyes perused
 With tearful vacancy the dampy grass
 That wept and glittered in the paly ray:
 And I did pause me, on my lonely way
 And mused me, on the wretched ones that pass
 O'er the bleak heath of sorrow. But alas!
 Most of myself I thought! when it befel,
 That the sooth spirit of the breezy wood
 Breathed in my ear: "All this is very well.
 But much of one thing is for no thing good."
 Oh my poor heart's inexplicable swell!

* *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. I.

SONNET II.

Oh I do love thee, meek Simplicity !
For of thy lays the lulling simpleness
Goes to my heart and sooths each small distress,
Distress though small, yet haply great to me.
'Tis true on Lady Fortune's gentlest pad
I amble on ; and yet I know not why
So sad I am ! but should a friend and I
Frown, pout and part, then I am very sad.
And then with sonnets and with sympathy
My dreamy bosom's mystic woes I pall ;
Now of my false friend plaining plaintively,
Now raving of mankind in general ;
But whether sad or fierce, 'tis simple all,
All very simple. meek Simplicity !

SONNET III.

And this reft house is that, the which he built,
Lamented Jack ! and here his malt he piled,
Cautious in vain ! these rats that squeak so wild,
Squeak not unconscious of their father's guilt.
Did he not see her gleaming through the glade !
Belike 'twas she, the maiden all forlorn
What though she milked no cow with crumpled horn,
Yet, aye she haunts the dale where erst she strayed :
And aye beside her stalks her amorous knight !
Still on his thighs their wonted brogues are worn,
And through those brogues, still tattered and betorn,
His hindward charms gleam an unearthly white.
Ah ! thus through broken clouds at night's high noon
Peeps in fair fragments forth the full-orbed harvest-moon ! *

* It may be well to quote here what Coleridge says of these sonnets:—
“ Every reform, however necessary, will by weak minds be carried to an excess, that itself will need reforming. The reader will excuse me for noticing that I myself was the first to expose *risu honesto*, the three sins of poetry, one or the other of which is the most likely to beset a young writer. So long ago as the publication of the second number of the *Monthly Magazine*, under the name of Nehemiah Higginbottom I contriouted three sonnets, the first of which had for its object to excite a good-natured laugh at the spirit of doleful

I think these sonnets will sufficiently indicate the chief faults of Coleridge; an occasional turgidity; a multiplication of epithets prior to the feeling of which the epithets should be but the expression,—a sin with which most of our poets are chargeable; *sticking in* the feelings, as it were, rather than *having* them—the true cant of poetry; getting up the feeling to order. There is a substantive wanting an adjective, and it is put in, not because the feeling in the mind dictates the adjective; but that for the sake of making it encomiastic or enthusiastic, it was proper that no poor substantive should be left to shift by itself, but thus be attended by a valet in the shape of an adjective or two. Coleridge's poems, like his prose, are doubtless sometimes obscure. There are reasons for this in the peculiar structure of Coleridge's mind,—that eternal discursiveness which is so often troublesome to his reader. For Coleridge seldom moves in straight lines; in order to reach a point, he walks round and round it. Every flower by the way he starts off to pluck, every butterfly he runs away in chase of; and his much-bewildered reader, not smitten with the love of butterflies, or not being a botanist or a lover of sweet scents, wishes to be kept straight on the road, and finds himself confused amid the vagaries of the author. This is mostly the case; it is very few that can keep up with him, not so much on account of the rapidity of his movement, as of the wide circles into which he digresses. A critic has explained this, I think, in the *Quarterly Review*, by saying that *unexpectedness* is one of his peculiar characteristics; that not only the reader, but the author himself, appears startled now and then with thoughts which he did not contemplate; that the utterance of a word seemed to raise up a whole series of thinking and illustration, which startled himself as much as his hearers. To explain the reason why a mind can be startled with its own thoughts, would lead me a long journey from my purpose. There *is* such a thing. 'Those who are true poets and artists are often more struck with the words they have uttered, the things they have written, the pictures they have

egotism, and the recurrence of favourite phrases, with the double defect of being at once trite and licentious. The second on low, creeping language and thoughts, under the pretence of simplicity. And the third, the phrases of which were borrowed entirely from my own poems, on the indiscriminate use of elaborate and swelling language and imagery."

painted, than any amateur or critic that comes to look upon them. Many of their works do not seem to be their own, and they are therefore astonished at the beauty and goodness of the thing they have done. What doctrine this points to I will not stop to tell, nor make myself answerable for the misconstruction which would be put upon any explanation of this, one of the most strange phenomena of the mind. The starting of a man at his own words, and the absolute wonder that comes over him, how he could say anything so good and strange—poets and artists know what this means. The artist paints away to-day in obedience to a feeling that bubbles up within him, to-morrow he comes back and starts at the beauty of it. Poets seem to have great thoughts given to them, and when they come in cool blood to look upon their works, when the heat of the occasion is over and gone, they smile upon their beauty, and cannot account for their origin. So it was with this great mind; unexpectedness in his works startled him as it does the reader. For with ordinary writers, the thing goes on in an easy noiseless flow; this sentence is there because the other goes before it, and because between the two there is a certain chain link of connection. But there is nothing of this kind with Coleridge. You may find here a sentence, and then following it one the connection of which can scarcely be seen, and for the understanding of which we must be content to wait for a long time. Oftentimes it seems as if there were a whole series of middle sentences left out, and he comes almost to the end before he has got at the beginning. This will explain much of the mysteriousness of Coleridge. We have dropped some links; perhaps he has dropped them himself; for some minds come intuitively to the conclusion, and others must be content to progress to it with slow and painful steps. When this is the case, all that can be done is to wait and study frequently, and then perhaps the power of the author will be such as to inform us with his spirit, so to make our intellect akin to his, that though we may not supply the lost link, we may hope to gain the power of making the same eccentric bound that he does. In German literature, Richter's writings afford many such cases, where intermediate links are gone; where he starts off, and we are left panting in the vain hope to see the consequence. There is a law in this, but it is a recondite and abstruse one. The only

mode by which to learn the effect is by constant and diligent study, and so, if possible, not by theory, but by practice, to master the method of the teacher, and to do that by instinct and impulse which he has already done.

III.

I was speaking of one peculiarity noticed by a critic, which he calls "unexpectedness," as being a characteristic of Coleridge's genius; that many of his thoughts seem to be both unexpected by the poet and the reader. This has been accounted for by another critic, by what he calls the *tangential* character of Coleridge's mind. He was always flying off at a tangent; and this, though lending much charm to his conversation, oftentimes produces obscurity in his writings. The effects of this peculiarity are found in his poems, in that he has not written a great poem. His poems are sun-beams or sun-glances, thrown on peculiar salient points. Everything he touches is made light and glorious; but by the very uncertainty, irregularity, want of set purpose and design, we are supplied with a number of minute pictures, with a depth of shadow quite Rembrandtish, rather than with great works like those of Raffaele. Certain points are "picked out" in light, and the rest of the picture left comparatively dark, for us to fill up as we please. This is seen in the full flood of light which he pours upon particular passions or feelings of the human mind; the cabinet pictures he gives of peculiar feelings. Like Wordsworth, he rises above that which is little, into the highest and sublimest poetic strains. This will be found in that specimen of what a hymn really is and should be, the verses composed in the vale of Chamouni. It is affectation of criticism to refuse to call anything a hymn but that which is reputed a hymn. The true meaning of a hymn should be the utterance of a thoroughly rapt and communing soul. But there are few men rapt now-a-days. It has well nigh gone out from us. Spiritual communion has been put down, under plea of idleness, and for a man to pronounce himself "rapt" as the ancients were—in that state of ecstasy of spirit which is possible—would be, in modern times, to proclaim himself a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. Nevertheless, there is such a state of feeling, when purpose, thought, logic, and

reasoning are not ; when they sink into nothingness ; when, in the fulness of feeling, there is little thought left for any orderly and systematic utterance ; but the man must pour forth his words, owing to the fulness of feelings, and the plenitude of spirit that bids him utter. Such are some of the highest strains of olden time—the mere ecstasy and pouring forth of an overcharged spirit. In them will be found little of system, because on account of their very origin they necessarily transcend the rules of logic. They are earlier than such, beyond them, and out of their province. “Hymns” usually are not of this rapt character, they are often like our prayers, too full of preachments, too full of doctrine and discussion ; rather thinkings than spiritual utterances. The reason why there are so few true hymns is, because there are so few who really feel this rapt communion with God. Standing in midst of one of nature’s grandest scenes, the poet appears merely to be the utterer of the great emotions summoned up thereby. I will read you a portion of the “Hymn before Sun-rise in the Vale of Chamouni,” to show what it truly is—an unreasoning, non-logical (not illogical), unpreaching utterance ; an utterance which comes because it cannot well avoid it,—a fulfilment of the saying, that “out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

“Awake, my soul ! not only passive praise
Thou owest ! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy ! Awake,
Voice of sweet song ! Awake, my Heart, awake !
Green Vales and icy Cliffs, all join my Hymn.
Thou first and chief, sole Sovereign of the Vale !
O struggling with the Darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink :
Companion of the Morning Star at Dawn,
Thyself Earth’s ROSY STAR, and of the Dawn
Co-herald : wake, O wake, and utter praise !
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth ?
Who filled thy Countenance with rosy light ?
Who made thee Parent of perpetual streams ?”

The following verses, “Lines composed in a Concert Room,” express another evanescent mood of the mind :—

- “Nor cold, nor stern, my soul ! yet I detest
 These scented Rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
 Heaves the proud Harlot her distended breast,
 In intricacies of laborious song.
- “These feel not Music’s genuine power, nor deign
 To melt at Nature’s passion-warbled plaint ;
 But when the long-breathed singer’s upheld strain
 Bursts in a squall—they gape for wonderment.
- “Hark ! the deep buzz of Vanity and Hate !
 Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer
 My lady eyes some maid of humbler state
 While the pert Captain, or the primmer priest,
 Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.
 O give me, from this heartless scene released,
 To hear our old musician, blind and grey,
 (Whom stretching from my nurse’s arms I kissed),
 His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,
 By moonshine, on the balmy summer night,
 The while I dance amid the tedded hay
 With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.
- “Or lies the purple evening on the bay
 Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide
 Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,
 For round their roots the fisher’s boat is tied,
 On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,
 And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,
 Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,
 That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.
- “But O, dear Anne ! when midnight wind careers,
 And the gust pelting on the outhouse shed
 Makes the cock shrilly on the rain-storm crow,
 To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
 Ballad of ship-wrecked sailor floating dead,
 Whom his own true-love buried in the sands !
- “Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice remeasures
 Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
 The things of nature utter ; birds or trees
 Or moan of ocean gale in weedy caves,
 Or where the stiff grass mid the heath-plant waves,
 Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.”

Some of you will probably find comfort in having such a high poetic authority for some of your musical heresies ; for I cannot doubt that your verdict on much that passes in the concert-room will be much like the poet's. Of course you know full well to what he alludes when he speaks of the people "gaping for wonderment," when, as a very wise man who spoke common sense and not fashion, said, it would be just as reasonable to applaud the man who could keep his head in a bucket of water longest ; for those shakes and trills of our singers which, to the shame of our vocal taste, gain so much applause, are often mere physical manifestations of the physical power of holding the breath for a long time. And many agree with the poet, that they would rather hear one of those "sad airs so wild and slow," that "wet the cheek with quiet tears," some simple English ballad, than all this mockery of music, this strange exhibition of mere physical power and long-breath hardihood. The same thing was said long ago by Robert Burns, in the "Cotter's Saturday Night," in which he tells us how certain old Scottish strains moved him more than the trills of Italian music ; a lesson which might be learned by some that if the object be to make music a culturer of the best feelings of the mind, to entrance and enwrap us in Elysium, it is better gained by the simple old ballad or the soul-stirring hymn, than any poor attempts at the rivalry of that which some half-guinea paid at the opera will enable us to hear in perfection. To me, Italian music is well enough in its season, but from lips which would interpret an old ballad better, it is an affectation unworthy of the simplicity and home-feeling by which our nation has long been characterised.

Another of these feelings, the love of country, is most beautifully rendered by the poet, so beautifully as almost to re-hallow that patriotism, the genuineness of which one is sometimes tempted to doubt, when we look back and see that patriotism in past history has meant the elevation of one country by the depression of others, for unfortunately the word patriotism has had this meaning. The patriot has too often been a man who loved his country exclusively, in a partizan spirit, and by that wicked rule from which we are not yet clear, that one nation is exalted by the depression of another. Instead of that, we are now teaching that the raising of all nations is the raising of each, and that is the

most noble patriotism which has such confidence in its own people as to be able to afford that other nations should have its advantages, and other people enter into a fair race with it, and feel that in the end the truest and best and most vigorous racer will win the fight. I will read a passage from the "Sibylline Leaves," illustrative of this feeling in Coleridge.

"When France in wrath her giant limbs upreared,
 And with that oath, which smote air, earth and sea,
 Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,
 Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared !
 With what a joy my lofty gratulation
 Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band :
 And when to whelm the disenchanting nation,
 Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
 The monarchs marched in evil day,
 And Britain joined the dire array ;
 Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
 Though many friendships, many youthful loves
 Had swol'n the patriot emotion
 And flung a magic light o'er a' her hills and groves ;
 Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
 To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
 And shame too long delayed and vain retreat !
 For ne'er, O Liberty ! with partial aim
 I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame ;
 But blessed the pæans of delivered France,
 And hung my head and wept at Britain's shame."*

This sympathy with another nation does not lessen his love for his own country

"But, O dear Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
 Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
 To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
 A husband, and a father ! who revere
 All bonds of natural love, and find them all
 Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
 O native Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
 How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
 To me, who from thy lakes and mountain hills,
 Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
 Have drunk in all my intellectual life,

France : an Ode.

All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in Nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!"*

I need not say how these lines illustrate what I have endeavoured to show as to the teachings of nature. Here is another great mind showing what can be gained from nature, and in his own case proving it; showing that it is the source of "all ennobling thoughts, all adoration of God in Nature, all lovely, and all honourable things." And from this, wise men will not suffer themselves to be driven by any attempt to put down such teaching or feeling as vague and mystic, or as detracting or taking away any of the reverence which is due to the more special revelation given in the Word of God.

One of the most extraordinary things about the poems of Coleridge is their exceeding melody; looking not so much to the thought, as to the expression of the thought, the words. It passes the power of criticism thoroughly to find out the secret of Coleridge's melody. The attempt has been made, but has never quite succeeded. Some of the poems seem to have a beauty almost independent of the sense. To hear them would be a song of melody and words of music. They resemble in that the Italian language, which to men who know nothing of it is yet musical and beautiful. Its very sounds are pleasant. The melody in Coleridge's poems arose from some fine attunement in the ear of the poet, the law of which he would find it as difficult to give as we should find it to supply. I will take up two or three passages which illustrate its exceeding beauty. I am not, however, going to enter into the question of the importance of rhyme or the lack of rhyme. Certainly the form must not be neglected, because it has been well said that the form of poetry is one of the fences

* *Fears in Solitude.*

which help to define the region of art from that of reality. And such a purpose does the melody, rhythm, or even rhyme of poetry ever serve. Poetry must be kept apart from mere reality, from historic recording. Art must always be allowed certain liberties to show that it is art. Hence we do not call a common-place portrait, where the object of the artist was just to picture down a man, a work of art; nor do we call a daguerrotype a work of art. It is but a cataloguing of actual realism. Common-place portrait-painters are not artists. They reproduce on canvas what they have seen, and no other. In taking of portraits, one goes all for likeness, and is angry as soon as the true portrait-painter comes, and paints the countenance, because he has not made it like. The true portrait-painter does not seek merely to copy the head, but to bring it into the region of art by idealising it. There are Sabbath times, as it were, with a man, when he stands as high as he possibly can; and such times will have a particular expression which will not be always there. The true artist will seek to embody that. He will seek to gain the best possible appearance from the man, and catalogue that upon the paper. As soon as he has done that and passed out of the region of mere reproduction, into that of idealism, then, for the first time, he gives us a work of art. It is so with poetry. Were it a mere cataloguing down of facts, or even of thoughts, it would have no distinction from history, or mere theological or metaphysical writing. Undoubtedly, many of our prose writers have been poets, and whenever they have been so, it will be found that they had the true peculiarities of poetry; but they rejected the form, and in doing so they have oftentimes rendered themselves liable to misconstruction, for they voluntarily remove one of those fences which serve to keep apart reality and poetry. The one may be dry matter-of-fact, and the other the same fact, but wedded to truth, or imagination, or romance. The rhythm of poetry helps to preserve this distinction. It is one of the modes by which it passes from mere portrait-painting into art; and the uses of this Coleridge appears to have been well versed in. Even rhyme itself is not the mere artificial and barbarous thing which some modern critics would have us think. It has a lower excellence, but it would not have come had there not been a feeling in us which called for it, which feeling is gratified by the recurrence of the rhyme. Perhaps one of the most

remarkable specimens of this melody, independent of the thought, is found in "Kubla Khan," a mere vision or dream. There is no finished or connected tale, scarcely any connected thoughts, yet it reads beautifully. I shall preface the poem with the history which the poet gives of it, because, by so doing, it becomes a strange psychological curiosity, supposing you believe the account that Coleridge gives of the lines :—

“ In the summer of the year 1797, the author, then in ill-health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in ‘Purchas’s Pilgrimage:’ ‘Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.’ The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines, if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort.”

In this historic piece concerning these lines, I think those who have listened carefully will see an indication of the distinction between the two classes of poetry of which I have spoken, where the one man merely records things as if watching them, and “builds up the lofty rhyme” step by step; and the case where that man is possessed, where the poem or the thoughts of it rise up before him, where, as Coleridge has it, he composes, “if that can be called composition where all the ideas rise up before him as things.”

“ On waking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room found to his no small surprise and mortification that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some

eight or ten scattered lines and images. all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas, without the after restoration of the latter."

Then come the lines which Coleridge says were "given to him." What peculiar word we may choose out of the dictionary to express the "giving" to a poet, I will leave you to settle. I will not supply the word which will rise up most readily, but I will leave it for each of you, in accordance with your own metaphysical theory, to supply the word which expresses that peculiar phase of being when something is breathed into a man, when it is "given to him," not dug up, built up, or elaborated by him, or spun out of him, but, as Coleridge has it, "given to him." There are two sources, according to theologians, for gifts—God and the devil. There are no other sources or origins for anything that I am aware of. Either they come from "the Giver of every good and perfect gift," or from the prince of darkness. I will leave it to you to settle for yourselves to which of these two parentages these lines must be ascribed. They run thus :—

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
 A stately pleasure-dome decree :
 Where ALPH, the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With wall and towers were girdled round :
 And *there* were gardens bright with sinuous rills
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree ;
 And here were forests ancient as the hills,
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

"But oh ! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
 A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover !
 And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
 As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
 A mighty fountain momently was forced :
 Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
 Or cnaty grain beneath the thresher's flail :

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean :
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war !

“The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves ;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice !
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw :
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on a dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome ! those caves of ice !
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, beware ! beware !
His flashing eyes, his floating hair !
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.”

Such dreams as that visit but few of us. As a psychological curiosity, it is worth your study. The laws of dreaming have not yet been expounded, and, naturally, it is difficult to expound them, for that which would give the explanation is not present when the dream is present. Herein is the difficulty of accounting for dreams. The dreaming is done by one, the accounting for it by another power ; but the accounting power is not present during the dreaming time, and therefore all we know about dreams is their reproduction by imagination or memory. To

some, dreams help to confirm faith ; for the dream which goes on without us, that ability to be when we are not, confirms their belief that the present conditions of mortality are not needful to the existence of that principle within us which is called spirit or soul. For when a man is wakeful, he is mortal, corporeal, fleshly ; and when he sleeps, in a sense, *he* has ceased to be : yet there has gone on something of which only memory gives him cognizance. Dreams seem to hint things unseen, and to sustain faith, that it may not degenerate into vision and sight : for if everything were made as plain and clear as some people wish, the province of faith would be gone. If man could walk by sight, if the world to come could be looked at as through the glasses of a show, if a man could see it actually and visibly, then walking by faith,—that sublimest instinct of a man's nature, which tells of a hereafter, though it sees it not,—would be impossible within him. Dreams seem to do what dreaming poetry, such as Coleridge's, does,—they help to keep alive and foster the instinctive feelings of the soul. They help to keep the wonder-part of a man's nature alive ; they help to keep us superstitious (if you will have it so), or, as some would render it, full of veneration, full of wonder, and full of faith in the invisible, intangible, and unseen.

There is but one passage which I can remember in modern poetry, comparable in point of melody to Coleridge, and that occurs in one of Tennyson's poems, and I will read it, as illustrative of the difference between melody as the outward form of expression, and the thought of which it may be the expression. It is the chorus in "The Lotos Eaters."

“Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why
 Should life all labour be ?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace

In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

“ How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
To hear each other’s whispered speech ;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in memory
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap’d over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !”

I have not read the whole of the piece, which I would commend to your attention, as one of the finest studies of the melody of language. You will see that it is almost impossible to replace a word without marring the beauty.

As a dramatist, Coleridge does not excel ; that is, if the drama is looked upon for the purpose of being theatrically rendered. As reading-dramas, his are good ; as acting-dramas, they are perhaps impracticable. But everyone acquainted with the drama in this country knows, that for a thing to be pronounced very actable, does not necessarily speak very highly of it as a play. For, unfortunately, noise often makes up for meaning, and with the drama, bustle and effect go further, and tell more with the audience than any deep passion,—just on the same principle as the squeals of music of which I have spoken before. These dramas are not the highest works of Coleridge ; they contain many beautiful passages, but there seem to be reasons in the mental constitution and peculiarities of the poet, which unfit him for being a great dramatist. He is too apt to dwell upon subjective feelings for the purposes of the drama. The drama must not do this ; though it is permitted for a few plays—such as Hamlet—to dwell upon, to detail and point out the subjective feelings, yet

surely the rule of the drama must be to deal with objective manifestations of foregone feelings, or the outward rendering of certain inward histories. We must not so much have a laying bare of the inward spirit, in order that the audience may see its workings, as an utterance of the spirit, in order that the same feelings may be called up and summoned in them.

As a translator Coleridge is unrivalled. Happy is the poet who gains such a translator. His translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein" is admitted by all who know the two languages to be unequalled. Some have said it excels the German. It has also been said that Schiller rendered back into German some of Coleridge's improvements. It is certain, however, that he did Schiller justice; and he has given, in the English version, some lines not to be found in the German, and those are of the highest beauty. Take, for instance, those lines in which there is, as it were, a heart-appeal to the old mythology and astrology.

"*Max.* O never rudely will I blame his faith
 In the night of stars and angels! 'Tis not merely
 The human being's pride that peoples space
 With life and mystical predominance;
 Since likewise for the stricken heart of love
 This visible nature, and this common world,
 Is all too narrow: yea, a deeper import
 Lurks in the legend told my infant years
 Than lies upon that truth—"we live to learn."
 For fable is love's world, his home, his birth-place.
 Delightedly dwells he 'mong fays and talismans,
 And spirits; and delightedly believes
 Divinities, being himself divine.
 The intelligible forms of ancient poets
 The fair humanities of old religion,
 The power, the beauty and the majesty
 That had their haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
 Or forest, by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
 Or chasms and wat'ry depths; all these have vanished.
 They live no longer in the faith of reason!
 But still the heart doth need a language, still
 Doth the old instinct bring back the old names.
 And to yon starry world they now are gone,
 Spirits or gods that used to share this earth
 With man as with their friend: and to the lover

Yonder they move, from yonder visible sky
Shoot influence down : and even at this day
'Tis Jupiter who brings whate'er is great,
And Venus who brings every thing that's fair.

Theckla. And if this be the science of the stars,
I too, with glad and zealous industry,
Will learn acquaintance with this cheerful faith.
It is a gentle and affectionate thought,
That in immeasurable heights above us,
At our first birth, the wreath of love was woven,
With sparkling stars for flowers.

The parallelism between the sonnet of Wordsworth which I have read to you,* in which, with shocking impiety, he prefers rather to be an old pagan, so that he can read nature in the light of poetry rather than in the mere science, is borne out by this beautiful passage from Schiller. Many of his passionate exclamations for the old poësy, if translated by any narrow and cribbed rules, would make Schiller appear to be a pagan. They are, however, but longings that science should keep itself in its proper place, and not lay its fingers upon all that is poetic and imaginative. In Schiller's time, the tendency, the mania, of accounting for everything, was rampant ; and it was against this that Schiller, Coleridge, and Wordsworth continually protested ; a prayer that they would leave just a little poetry in the world ; a preference rather to have the old mythology back again, than to have the godless system of "Nature." It is a passionate protest against the class who would "peep and botanize upon their mother's grave."

But quotations from Coleridge I must not multiply. The question, now, is the relative place which I will assign Coleridge among his brother poets. With all my reverence for him as a man, I must make him one of the *dii minores* of poetry. He stands inferior to Wordsworth and to Shelley—to Wordsworth, as a thoughtful and meditative metaphysical poet, and to Shelley, as an impulsive, rapt poet. Coleridge's poems are but few ; they make us sorry he did not do more. But being but fragmentary, sun-lights upon particular bits of the picture, they give us a succession of pleasures, without doing for us the high ministration

* Page 295.

that the continued strain of Wordsworth effects, or bringing us into that rapt communion with Nature which Shelley's poems do. I put Wordsworth and Shelley as the representatives of two very different modes of poetry. The one is more like the standing of the priest near the Pythoness, to record her utterance; whereas the other is the mounting of the tripod, and being the mouth-piece through which the *afflatus* should come. The one—Wordsworth—calm, quiet, and unimpassioned, a noter down of the utterances of the priestess Nature; while, on the other hand, Shelley is passionate and impulsive, lending himself to be a mere uttering-power for deep feelings, which rise up in weird and mystic form. Neither of these does Coleridge excel. He does not come up to Wordsworth as a calm, philosophical writer, nor to Shelley as an utterer of the passionate and impulsive.

I have dwelt long upon the peculiarities of Coleridge's poetry; his rendering into the objective the less defined and the less definable feelings of humanity. The dreaminess, the mystery, the subjective superstitiousness of our nature, the strange feelings upon which the dramatist, the poet, and the romancer must build up their fictions; these things have been rendered by Coleridge. During conversations upon poetry between Wordsworth and Coleridge, previous to their removal to the Lake country, a kind of stipulation or agreement was entered into between them. Wordsworth was, through common-place things and common-place incidents, subject to the colouring and working of Nature, conscience, and the mind, to do the effect of the supernatural without employing supernatural agency. This he has done in "Peter Bell," where all the effects of supernaturalism are brought about without a single unconditional supernatural occurrence. Coleridge was to take the other department, and, by a supernatural agency, produce supernatural feelings. Wordsworth, by natural feeling, was to bring about supernaturalism: Coleridge, by supernaturalism, was to bring about the same effects. Therefore, "Peter Bell" and "The Ancient Mariner" ought to stand side by side. Probably, you have never linked them before; but, upon metaphysical as well as poetical principles, they are pendants the one to the other. "Peter Bell"—the working upon the soul through the medium of natural objects, coloured, made romantic and strange by conscience, by the common

indwelling powers of our nature; "The Ancient Mariner," on the other hand, an invocation of the unreal and supernatural, in order to bring over us a weird spell. In their way, they are both equally successful; in their peculiar walk, both equally beautiful. To my mind, they both succeed, to a certain extent that leaves nothing to be desired. "Peter Bell" becomes a man regenerate, though roughly altered, by the power of the soul transfusing its own feelings into the commonplace forms of natural phenomena. On the other hand, "The Ancient Mariner" just casts over us a spell, very illogically or unlogically, and it comes in spite of logic. We may reason ourselves into the most logical state possible, summon all our philosophy, manhood, anti-superstition; and they will each of them flit away under the tale of "The Ancient Mariner." He shall lay his finger upon us, and fix his glance upon us, and our determinations not to be imposed upon by dreamers or poets—all these will be laid; *they* will be the ghosts, and the ghosts will *lay them*; and this in spite of all we can do to the contrary.

I have dwelt on the other peculiarity of Coleridge—the objective form he has given to many feelings of our mind, which are only phases of being. He has, as it were, called down the fleeting clouds of the soul of man, and rendered them into a shape and form; feelings that only come now and then; transcendental, they come over us, rather than come at our beckoning; that rather take possession of us, than are called up and invoked. Coleridge is the barometer of the weather of the soul; and his poems are its variations. There is a difference between mental operations. I can bring myself into a logical state at will or call; I can summon certain intellectual powers of my nature into action, by giving them the due *pabulum*; but, again, there are certain other things which come whether we will them or not. The mind is subjected to impulses. A man is sometimes joyous, he knows not why; or bowed down, he cannot tell how: trembles, when he sees no cause for it, and feels feelings which pass knowledge. The poet has rendered these into verses of such a form as to enable us to produce the feelings which gave them birth almost at pleasure.

Some of Coleridge's poetry is artificial, rather than natural; much of it again is the most natural utterance that can be, as

natural and unreasonable as the laugh of a child, and for which no more reason should be asked, or given, than for the laughter of a child or for the shriek of pain. Utilitarian laws applied to Coleridge will find themselves sent home without an answer. He is the poet and writer that will bear least that kind of measurement. Some of his poems simply are, because the feeling was : he can give no other reason or law for them than this. He has pointed out his own faults, in the sonnets which I read to you—a turgidity of style, a multiplication of epithets for the sake of the epithets—a fault which besets young poets when they do the epithets to order—when, given the substantive, they find the necessary adjective for it. The substantive comes bare and alone ; it would not do to usher it into respectable company in so very nude a state, and, therefore, the poor poet is obliged to fish for an adjective with which to clothe it. What is the consequence? You can shift the adjectives from the substantives without doing any damage. They are not a skin, but a coat ; they are not the natural dress in which the thought would express itself, but a piece of borrowed finery, got from the second-hand clothes shop, the rhyming dictionary, or from previous poets. Into this fault Coleridge fell in his youth ; but he has himself been the severest exposé of this very fault. No man has said severer things of his own poetry than Coleridge has, nor better criticised the poetry of others. If you would wish to see the best criticism on some of the peculiarities of Wordsworth, you will find them in Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria." The same laws of criticism apply to Coleridge's own poems, and I commend this remarkable chapter to your attention.

I will repeat the intimation, that I have not striven to go through the works to bring up before you the "beauties," or to make a selection from the "gems" of these poets, but merely to illustrate, in such wise as I could, some of those principles which are most peculiar or distinctive in them. You may think I have sometimes wandered away from my text. Purposely I have ; in order to make those peculiarities as clear as might be. What I have striven to do, has been simply to prepare those of you who were not students of these poets to a more thoughtful study of them, and to revive, for most of you, their teachings ; and I have

given (as is done sometimes upon the walls of Pompeii—By throwing a little fresh water over them an old Roman painting is brought out again, and lives in its old freshness) a dash, then, of water, perhaps with a careless and unskilful hand, at the mental pictures written long ago, in the days of youth, by Wordsworth and Coleridge. If I have made the colours live again but a little, in their old beauty and freshness, I have done my work.

THE GENIUS AND WORKS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

BORN 1795. DIED 1881. (FROM 35TH GEO. III. to 44TH VICTORIA).

I.

IT may appear singular to choose for my subject the works of a living author, but in favour of this choice much might be said. I see not the advantage of waiting till a man be dead before any due attempt is made to appreciate his labours, or to give him the meed of praise he deserves. Though I am not foolish enough to suppose that anything of praise or blame I can offer will move the man whose works I am to consider; yet, if anything I should say should influence or move you, perchance my author may thereby be stimulated to continue those labours as far as they are good, or to remodel those things which are felt to be, or which appear, unworthy of a man so great as Thomas Carlyle. For my own part, I cannot profess to review thoroughly the works of that writer, but am content rather to play the part of a humble sign-post, and direct your attention to the man; or to attempt, at least, to do as soldiers at a siege, who lay their own dying bodies in the breach, in order that others, to whom fate has behaved more kindly, may pass over them. If I fail, my failure even may help some of you to a better understanding of that great man and his writings. I will pass on to those writings, and in doing so will briefly notice the spirit of the age that is past, and the spirit of that which is before us,—the spirit of yesterday and to-day.

You know that the spirit of English literature during the latter part of the past century had almost totally forgotten its high and noble profession. Its poetry had become a thing completely artificial, with no sympathy for the great mass of the people, finding its seventh heaven in the trivolties of a court, and rejoicing

in the sunshine of court favour ; caring nothing for the people, whom it regarded only as the swinish multitude, the ignorant and unwashed crowd. A little reading of the works of Pope would show you the style of thought in that age ; that those men concentrated their thoughts upon the fripperies of the day, that they had forsaken nature, and driven away from them whatever was original and beautiful in human life, in order to hold up to admiration the fripperies and follies of the age. Following upon that style of literature came that other brood of the writers preceding the French Revolution, whose works tended to reduce all to a dead and cold materialism ; who would have had no such words as “ God,” “ the soul,” “ heaven,” or “ immortality ;” who treated all high and holy things as mere inventions of priestcraft, intended to deceive the people. Believing nothing that it could not see or feel, it treated as childish, idle, foolish, and feeble, the man who believed anything beyond what his own good five senses showed to him. One of the great Germans, speaking of their materialistic philosophers, says :

“ They came, saw, and conquered,—all who were at table expecting them. Heavens ! they were enlightened eighteenth century men. They stood up stoutly for moderate freedom and good amusing reading, and moderate Deism, and moderate Philosophy. They delivered themselves most clearly against the apparition of spirits, against all illusions, and all extremes. They liked very well to read their poets, as models of style to be advantageously used in business, and as relaxations from solid affairs ; they relished nightingales—roasted, and liked myrtles as Spanish bakers do—to heat their ovens with ; they had killed the great sphinx who sets us the riddle of life, and carried off the stuffed hide, and they held it for a wonder that anybody else would now submit to be puzzled. Genius, said they, we would certainly not throw away—we would keep it for sale ; and their icy souls burn but for one object—for the body : this is solid and real ; this is the true State, and Religion, and Art.”

And a still severer sentence is passed upon them by the same great man, when he says, the day will come “ when of the World will be made a world-machine, of the *Æther* a gas, of God a force, and of the Second-World—a coffin !” Thus was it that during the French Revolution they passed a law one day decreeing that

there was no God, and the next another, declaring that there is to be a God. They decreed this because it was a good thing for the people; not because of any real belief they had themselves in a God, but because they found there was so much of what they called "the old leaven" left that the people could not be managed without a restoration of these "old fables," in which men had so long believed.

A remarkable thing about this literature was its utter failure to distinguish its end from its means. Men wrote books or verses, and spoke speeches, not as ministers to bring about any high and holy ends in the earth, but to exercise what was termed their "wit and parts," to amuse the age, or to teach some very small parts of morality or manners. Now, in this respect, our age is eminently distinguished above that; and, especially of late, men of great minds have consecrated their talent to the use of the people. Many of you must have seen a translation of a great German's work upon "The Nature and Office of the Scholar,"* where he shows that the scholar should stand up the true priest upon earth, the minister between the material and immaterial; that it is his mission ever to stand up a tribune of the people; to uphold the rights of man against whatsoever is tyrannical or oppressive.

He endeavours to show that authors of the present day have a high priesthood; and whensoever they forget their mission, and fail to make their work tributary to such great end, then they are no longer to be ranked amongst the ornaments of the earth, but are to be esteemed as of that Grub-street fraternity, who write to live, to minister to the wants of the body, or to the calls of their ambition. There are in being, especially now-a-days, a class of men in society who pique themselves on being practical men. I have all respect for practical men when in their proper place; but the mistake of them is, that they sneer at the writers of abstract writings, or the thinkers of abstract thought. These busy, bustling men, think that they manage the world, and can very well dispense with poets, preachers, and writers, all of whom they regard as visionaries. The members of their order believe and look upon the world as a good counting-house, to which nothing

* Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Translated by William Smith. London: Chapman.

is wanting but well-skilled clerks to carry on the business nicely, and to finish the work comfortably at the close of day. Now these men are grievously in fault, for after all they are but the chessmen on the board, the mere pawns, moved by the great thinkers of the age. And this sublime revenge have the great thinkers upon these practical men,—that to future ages *they* only reign, and the practical people are forgotten. Many cities of Greece quarrelled about the birth-place of Homer, after his death, though, while living, they suffered the blind old bard to beg in their streets. Robert Burns was almost starved; and Samuel Johnson, at one part of his life, had scarcely shoes to his feet, and yet he was proud enough to throw the shoes proffered to him ignobly and officiously right out of the window. Practical people sneer upon these men; poets perish in penury, and prophets are turned into martyrs; but God takes care that his innocent ones shall not go unrevenged, for after they die they are canonised. As Christ told the Jews long ago, who first stoned the prophets and then canonised them, “Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.”

Yet not altogether have these men been neglected: the lords of action, at different times in the world's history, have paid due homage to the lords of thought. This is true of the poets; especially true of the prophets. The true kings of the earth have always been the poet, the so-called visionary, and the seer. We read in the old time, that the recital of a few verses of a Greek poet saved a prisoner from destruction; we find that such was the influence of the blind old beggar bard, that he could make an Alexander imitate even the worst things that Homer's heroes had ever done. In the middle ages, a somewhat despised man was at last so recognised as to ride laurel-crowned and triumphant throughout the streets of the Eternal City. Old John Milton, blind and beggared, was yet the moulder, and to a great extent the maker of the age in which he lived. Many a king and emperor now lies so forgotten that his name is not recognised; whereas, these great men, standing here and there in history, are those before whom we to this day bow, and to whom we pay a grateful tribute. Was George the Fourth or Walter Scott the true king of their time? The one, it is true, reigned, nominally at least, over the kingdom; but the other reigned by the firesides

and in the hearts of the people, and they paid tribute to him. This is the revenge which the great thinkers have upon the age that neglects them,—that that age is at last obliged to confess that, to a great extent, it was made and moulded by those very men whom it despised.

I have indicated a change between the spirit of the last age, or of yesterday, and that of to-day : in their literature that change is striking. To whom is the honour due of effecting that change? First and foremost, to our great poet, Wordsworth. He was one who, despising the artificial poetry of the last century, endeavoured to restore man to the old standard of Nature, which distinguished him before frivolous and hollow scepticism, and shallow infidelity, came into vogue amongst us. It is said that “familiarity breeds contempt,”—and thus with Nature, men neglect it, see nothing in it but a well-got-up stage for them to act on ; forgetting that Nature is a veil, partly to hide God and partly to reveal him. The spirit of poetry and the spirit of the age had come to be that which Wordsworth gives to one of his heroes,* when he says—

“ A primrose by a river’s brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,—
And it was nothing more.”

He could see none of the dimly-revealed things behind it ; nothing to tell him of the grace and beauty of its existence, or of the goodness and beauty of God : to him it was just a yellow primrose. The same spirit is expressed in Schiller’s epigram. One of the old goddesses of the Egyptian faith being worshipped under the form of a cow, he says—

“ To some she was the goddess great,
To some the milch-cow of the field,—
Their wisdom was to calculate
What butter she would yield.”

This was the spirit of those men of the last age, who looked at the great, and high, and noble, only for what could be made of it ; not as enabling them to ascend to something else. Then came the worship of Utilitarianism,—a thing very useful in itself, but an utter mockery when set before men as the great guiding principle of human life.

* Peter Bell.

To overthrow these things, and also that painful conventionality which can see no greatness but in things stamped great by the hands of men ; which can see no beauty in the meaner things around us ; which forgets the Scripture precept, "honour all men," and bestows its thanks and its praise only upon the vulgar great,—to overthrow these things was the great end which Wordsworth set before him. Hence, some of his poetry seems to be ridiculous till it gets to be understood. He purposely chose the low and the mean, to show that with them dwelt the high and holy. He may have pushed it to extremity ; he may have thrown down, as has been said, a clod of earth before the men of the age, and said, "Lo ! here is a god,"—and so may have erred ; but he was perfectly right in taking up some of the little things of the earth, to show a "flunkey age," as Carlyle expresses it, what things they worshipped if only they were adorned with gold,—to show that age that, in the little, mean, and neglected things around us there dwells a divinity, a high possibility, a capacity of becoming truly noble and great. Of course, the poet was sneered at, at first ; he was treated as a visionary, mocked, and laughed at ; but he went on his way ; he was one of the strong souls who care little for other people's opinions, relying upon their own conduct and conscience ; so he went on his way rejoicing.

He was seconded by that greatest of modern Englishmen, as far as intellect is concerned—Coleridge ; who took for his task to revive the faith of men, even in the dreamy, the mysterious, and the invisible. Wordsworth and Coleridge made an agreement : the one was to put beauty and vitality into the meaner things of nature, the other to revive the old fairy tales, dreams, and necromancy of the middle ages ; and no man with a soul can read his "Ancient Mariner" without feeling a weird influence, and rising into a region quite other and different from that everyday region in which the business of life calls us to move. This man did much to revive a study of the German language and literature amongst us. Not so many years back in this country, the opinion of German literature was that it was composed of bits of metaphysical transcendentalism and other glimpses of cloud-land. We are not far enough off from this prejudice to have forgotten it. We are still called upon to enter into a serious defence of German literature ; for every now and then pious men lift up

their hands in horror at the idea of sending a student to any of the German Universities. Ugly names are applied, and these are generally efficacious ; and these people have now got hold of the term "Neology," and by their talk of a "neological and heathen literature," they succeed in frightening some. These stock names are always kept by men, as good extinguishers to clap over everything which they do not like ; men keep an assortment of them by them ; and if a man comes forward with any scheme or project of which they do not approve, they have only to call him a "dreamer," and he is put out at once. If a writer states anything not pleasing to them, or an inventor exhibits to them his plan, if they like it not, they have only to call him "enthusiast" or "visionary," and he is gone at once. If he would be a reformer in morals or religion, they have only to call him "hypocrite" or "infidel," and to brand him as a "dangerous person," and he is very quickly disposed of and done with. Many do not like this German literature, so they have only to call it infidel, metaphysical, pantheistic, and neological, and it is quite completely done with, for those who will not think for themselves. But mark the change in this respect ; we are obliged to allow that the German literature is at present the best worth studying ; the thoughtful studious men of this country prefer to learn the German language, and although it may shake the pride of us Englishmen, it cannot be denied that in almost every department of Literature and Science, the most valuable books are to be imported from Germany. The number of great men in Germany of late, including those of the first order, such as Schiller and Goethe, we are able only to match, and excel, by bringing forth the greatest names the world ever produced. Now, instead of Germany being tabooed, sneered at, every studious man of any mark has a knowledge of the German language and literature ; our theologians find they must understand it ; our divinity tutors find they must instruct their students in it ; and, as we are coming to that state of things when men are not to be treated as children, to be dogmatised to, to be told only one side, to be watched and guarded for fear they should hear something naughty, or mistake poison for food, this study of German will necessarily progress and increase. Even now, strange to say, our thoughts are becoming impregnated with its spirit. We are getting German in our phrasology, we begin to take their authors for

our guides, following the example they long ago set us, for our Shakespeare was never thoroughly understood in this country till we received him back illustrated and explained from Germany. They took our great idol; removed the paint daubings of small critics and commentators, and, having crowned him with a wreath woven by their noblest men, sent him back to us, so that we could love and admire him more than before.

How was this great change brought about? Partly by Coleridge; but chiefly by the man about whom I am to lecture—Thomas Carlyle. At first, he came before the public as a translator from the German, and so thoroughly had he studied the works of Germans—"he wrestled," says one, "so long with Jean Paul, to master his spirit, that, like Jacob of old, his thigh has been put out, and he has halted in his English ever since."

This, to some degree, is the truth; for he has never walked thoroughly like an Englishman since.

Proceeding to the more immediate subject of my lecture, I am not here to gossip of the man and his pursuits, and daily habits of life. When he was born, where he lived, at what time he rose in the morning, what he ate and drank, and how many pipes he smoked, must be left to be chronicled in some of the gossiping books that delight the age in which we live. My duty is to lecture upon his genius and his works. I find him first appearing before the public by writing a life of that great German, Schiller. This book bears few traces of Carlyle's English style; almost anyone would read it without being puzzled; and what is singular, as has been remarked by Professor Longfellow in his "Hyperion,"—in this life of Schiller, Carlyle has written a sentence actually condemnatory of the course he afterwards took himself. He says:—

"Often a proposition of inscrutable and dread aspect, when resolutely grappled with and torn from its shady den, and its bristling entrenchments of uncouth terminology, and dragged forth into the open light of day, to be seen by the natural eye, and tried by merely human understanding, proves to be a very harmless truth, familiar to us from of old—sometimes so familiar as to be a truism. Too frequently the anxious novice is reminded of Dryden in the 'Battle of the Books': there is a helmet of rusty iron, dark, grim, gigantic; and within it, at the farthest corner, is a head no bigger than a walnut."

In his after works his style is undoubtedly peculiar, but this point I shall in great part hand over to those whose duty it is to "chronicle small beer." It has been expounded, commented on, and sneered at by various writers. Reviews, that should have known better, have spent more of their pages upon his style than upon what the subject matter, conveyed in that style, intends to teach. But now, forsooth, one man is told to read Addison to form a style; another is told to read Johnson to form a style; and a host of young men are doing their best in following the style of that preacher, or the other writer, forgetting that if you follow the style carved out for himself by another you only exaggerate it. A man wishing to plough, and following in the same furrows which another has previously made, will find that the wriggle of the first furrow has got itself sadly magnified in the second. For my own part, I do not see how men can studiously follow one another's styles; there appears to me too much imitation already amongst us. Addison's style is good, Johnson's may be good, but the best English style I know is old John Bunyan's, which is the most nervous, hearty, vigorous, racy, English style perhaps ever witnessed.

One peculiarity of Carlyle's style deserves notice—his revival of many of the old Saxon words, for none of the semi-French and semi-Latin words imported of late so strike upon an Englishman's heart and feelings as the good old Saxon: *they* sound homelike, not like the fripperied follies of modern times, but like the earnest, hearty days of our fathers, under the best development. I am for their revival, therefore, especially as it would enable us to revive the significance of many an old thought and old feeling. Those who are students of language must have observed how words get clothed upon with ideas which they did not originally express, till at last the original beauty has gone out of them, and they express something different from their original signification. Going back to those old meanings, sometimes, is almost as good as a new thought. This Carlyle has frequently done, and Coleridge recommends the study of the etymology of words as one of the best studies in which a young man can engage. In one of his works he gives an example of this. He takes the word "heresy," and shows that its old Greek meaning was a lifting up of something, and that, therefore, the definition of heresy is when a man lifts a

meaning or idea of his own and makes it a rallying sign or the symbol of a party. If this definition were true, we should find in our lists of those called heretics many a man who has a claim rather to be a judge of heretics than a heretic himself. In one respect I think Carlyle has improved the English language, and that is in the use he makes of words banded and coupled together as epithets. The Greek language is probably the noblest and fullest in this respect of any, for where we have to put three or four words, it renders them into one long, compound, musically-sounding word. Compound words are too few in the old language of England; the old Saxon tongue did not rejoice in long words, and stood rather in dread of them; but we now need compound words, in order to avoid that diluted style, which the writings of the last half century have supplied—something by which our thoughts may be more compressed, masculine, and energetic—and this Carlyle has done in some of the singularly beautiful epithets which he has strung together into these compound words, in which the Greeks and Germans were thought to have the pre-eminence, but which he has demonstrated the English language is quite as capable of showing, and being rightly used under, as either of those tongues.

Of course, one charge against the style of Carlyle is that it is hard to be understood. Doubtless it is so; and this is to be lamented, because it mars a man's usefulness. But this is less an evil than may be supposed; for a man who will not take the trouble to penetrate the style, is not the man to be blest by such writing. A man used to the shallow style of to-day, if he finds himself too lazy to crack this singular shell, in which a goodly kernel is enveloped, why, he may content himself with the conviction that the kernel is not for him. Nay, I rather think there is some use in this shell with which Carlyle has surrounded himself; it frightens certain people away from him, for there are some in the world who do not fully understand, but run away with a bit here and a bit there; and to them, and through them, what taken in connection is sublime utterance, becomes utter folly.

There are certain men respecting whom it may be said, without any offence being meant to them, that we must not cast our pearls before swine; they have no understanding for such matters; all is lost and wasted upon them. By surrounding these great, and, in

such hands, dangerous thoughts, with a triple fence of curious style, these lazy, indolent, and unthoughtful people are kept in their proper places. They are very good outer-court worshippers; good for taking up a shout when it is raised, and for carrying it on when commenced; very useful to read the small novels of the day, but clearly not the people to penetrate into the Holy of Holies. Those who can reach there may come forth, and put into some homely and popular dialect so much of the truth as these smaller souls can understand. There are things in Thomas Carlyle hard to be understood; and if such people were to get hold of them they would find that they would not fit them at all; to them they would be like the two-handed swords of a by-gone age, which their puny arms could not lift. These men are frightened away from Carlyle by his style, which operates on them as a warning not to trespass there. Though Carlyle, therefore, has been blamed for his style as marring his usefulness, it does not mar it so much as is thought, while its singularity gives a warning to the idler and the lounging reader, "Keep off these premises; there is nothing inside for lazy people." Carlyle admits his readers into a workshop, where they must be prepared to labour diligently, and not into a lounge or fashionable book-shop, where they may read here a page and there a page, and then go forth in their pride to talk shallow nonsense about everything, and to slander those they imagine more witless or less informed than themselves. It is as if Carlyle had said, "I hate the profane vulgar, and would drive them from me." It seems as if his singular style is like the conditions put by the hierophants of old to those whom they would initiate into their mysteries; and except they choose to go through the ordeal, they have nothing to do there. So, before the knight of ancient chivalry received his knighthood, he had to watch through the night in some chapel, in lonely silence and prayer; and, having done this, he received from some superior the *acolyte* and the spurs. And here is Carlyle ready to knight anyone, to make him a possessor and participant in the great realm of thought, and to admit him into the sublime dreams and visions of good, given by the great powers to him; but if the aspirant is not content to wait and watch in his style, and to do what his pride may not like—to read some sentences many a time over, he is not worthy to be made a true knight, and must be left

to find his fill of enjoyment in the small magazine literature, with which the works of Carlyle should not be in the slightest degree compared. One great difficulty of this style to Englishmen arises from their not being previously acquainted with German, so that the style strikes them as foreign; but those acquainted with German soon learn to see that under this singular mask there are features beautiful and captivating to all the lovers of beauty and truth. A resolute intention to master Carlyle's works would soon enable anyone to discover that the mysteries of his style may be surmounted. That it is singular and difficult, I admit, but that Carlyle can utter his thoughts in any other I deny. It is said in the story of Saul, that he stood above the people by the whole head and shoulders; and so, in these crowded times, if a man would gain any notice he must stand above the people by his whole head at least. This, Carlyle's style, has done for him; it is to him the herald's trumpet proclaiming high announcements to come.

Now, as to the genius of the man. One of his greatest and, as I think, his sublimest attempts, is to revive each man's faith in himself and in his individuality. It appears to me that one of the diseases of to-day is that man has lost faith in what a single stout heart and strong hand can accomplish; that men have come to be fractional units, and that you must put some twenty thousand of them together before it is believed to be safe to move. "What can a single man do?" is often piteously asked. Look into history; and there you will see that the greatest things of this world have been wrought out by single men, and often in obscurity; and that your clubs and associations do, in reality, far less than single men. It is sometimes said jestingly of the men of a certain trade, that it takes nine of them to make a man; but let us look to see if this does not, to some extent, hold good of all of us. This is a diseased *want of manhood*, of self-reliance, and self-trust; and to overthrow this Carlyle has done much. He has pointed to single men, to what they have done single-handed, and shown that the whole world lies before the single man, and tried to get you to look inwards into the soul. It appears to me that the soul of a man and the inward life are the true key and exposition of all things, past, present, and to come, and that a man cannot too much cultivate the dignity and noble-

ness of his nature. I am aware that certain professors of theology find fault with these doctrines. They say, when a man talks of showing a becoming pride, that it is contrary to the doctrine of the depravity of his nature. Now, I am willing to confess that a man's possibilities are high and mighty; his actualities little and small. Paul expressed this very sentiment long ago when he said, "Of myself I can do nothing; but I can do all things through God, who strengtheneth me." The possible before him was wide and boundless; the actual and real was little and small. What Carlyle has done, and what we should all wish to do, is to revive this sense of the dignity of the soul. A man should say to himself, "Mark how God hath taught me this lesson: here is my soul, royal and kingly, a true monarch; king, poet, philosopher, or sage, may not enter into my soul, without paying to me tax and tribute. Everything must enter my spirit upon the condition of taking the colour thereof." Hence, every man is the judge, in one sense, of the whole earth, and of things past, present, and to come. Hence arise differences of opinion on religion and politics. My soul is one; yours is another; and though the same truth may enter both, my door may be lower and narrower than yours, and thus, to enter it, truth must stoop lower, and divest itself of something, which the loftier and wider porch of your intellect allows it room to bear along with it.

Now, to illustrate my meaning,—that the inner life of a man is the key to all things, past, present, and to come,—let us take a problem in history or theology. You wish to understand past history,—its soul and spirit, I mean, for we have now done, I trust, with the old style of history, which merely relates a thing, a bare fact, while modern history tries to make old times live before you; it makes men, not shadows, but actual breathing realities. The mere facts of history are perfectly useless; it is of no manner of use to know that William the Conqueror died on such a day, of such a disease: that is mere lumber. The mere facts of history are like the beads of a rosary, with no string to keep them together; there must be some connection, some train of thought, something linking them together, and making of them either a necklace of ornament for the body, or a rosary of prayer, by which the soul takes or keeps account of its devotion. I find all the facts of history interpreted by my own spirit. I wish to understand the old

account of the fall of man. I go back, in my own life, and remember the day, when after keeping a character for avoiding some particular sin for some time, I first fell into it ; and here was acted for me, in my own soul, the fall of man. You have only to remember the first day you fell into this snare or that vice, and you will then realise to yourselves the fall of man. Take another instance. How will you understand this passage ?—"God's voice was heard in the cool of the evening, and Adam hid himself." Many of you may have known what it is to hide from a father's eye, from a mother's look, when you have sinned or fallen ; have understood what it is to be cast out of the Paradise of a quiet soul ; to desire to hide from the eyes of a family who before thought you spotless and blameless ; in short, you have felt what it is to be ashamed to meet the image of God, in the soul of the true man ; and thus your own souls may interpret to you the history of the fall of man. Suppose we wish to understand the spirit of the many rebellions, revolutions, and overthrows there have been in the earth. Let us remember a part of our own history as young men ; how at certain times we did not like to give in to forms of society ; how very much we disliked sitting in pews on Sunday, and being obliged to conform to other people's rules ; how we protested, and at times got very bitter against it, and made efforts to throw it off ; we did not like the old people having so much authority over us ; we thought they claimed too much. Well, here is the spirit of revolution and rebellion. You do not like the authority placed over you ;—you are a Jacobin for the time. You do not like that a man should rule over you ; here you are a true republican. You do not like, again, that certain men should get to the top of society : you cannot understand why, in addressing them, you may not speak what you like ; why a man should exact outward forms of respect and deference, and even submission from you ; here you are a complete leveller and democrat. In this way, by looking into your own soul and your own past history, you will yourselves understand the revolutionary spirit of all times. It is but for a number of men to feel this ; it is but for the burden to get too oppressive, for the last hair to be put on the camel's back, and then revolution breaks forth, a protest and a dissidence against things as they are. A young man enters into the world, and examines the forms of religion and truth set before him ; he is astonished at the number of sects and parties in the

world; he has been bred up in one, and he learns to dislike the others; and herein, in all probability, he acts foolishly, if he forgets the great religious truth, that there never did exist a sect or party, in religion or politics, that did not exist rather by the truth that was in it than by the falsehood. The history of a new sect is, that the dominant sect has forgotten some truth which the new one has brought forth, and, by virtue of being the only reviver of it, thus makes too much of it. We want to understand, in a catholic spirit, the religious changes and doctrines of bygone times: let us look into our own spirits, and we see them all. You wish, for instance, to understand the tenets of John Calvin. It is only for you to see in things around you only the hard destiny of fate; to sigh over circumstances which you wish better; to remember how many times you have felt sad, as, bowed down by work, or surrounded by the difficulties of poverty, or obscurity, or want of knowledge, you have felt the iron hand of destiny upon you, and at times you have almost rebelled under it;—do you not see how a man, whose view is continually directed to this side of life, will therein propose to himself a theory of stern fate? At other times, you know you are free, and feel it; you rejoice in a free choice; and if a man were to say that you have no choice, you would deem him to be uttering a treason. Herein you understand the other side of this theological debate; you can understand how this phase of your own soul's history has gotten itself to be made into the creed of a party, and the religion of a sect.

We might show, too, that often circumstances of history which are obscure can be explained by our own hidden light. The old doctrine of the microcosm of man's soul,—the little world within, which is so closely connected with the great world without, has been revived by some modern philosophers, who say that the blood of any man is found to consist of small globules, each of which, when examined minutely, is found to be the type of all the species or genera. Perchance that is only a hoax or a dream, but with respect to the soul of man it is a truth. The soul of man is a mirror, wherein the whole world or universe of nature may get itself represented; true, it is small, but yet it is minutely correct.

There is a certain truth in the doctrine of the community of soul,—that we have but one soul in us all; and if that is true, or near the truth, then we are right in saying that we should care

fully watch man's own hidden life, for it will give him a key by which to unlock all mysteries. With respect to the outer culture of man, some of you, say, are stiff and stern Protestants ; you cannot understand the gorgeous and scenic worship of the old church. But only let us wish ourselves walking in the sublime cathedrals of this or other lands ; only let us read the description of the performance of the *Miserere*, in the Sistine chapel at Rome, in the holy week ! But there are times in our lives when we find ourselves higher than the mere forms and pageants of the outward worship, and when we call it a mere child's bauble ; when, by the waving of a magic wand, we get into the exaltation of that worship, after all the sublimest, where a man, withdrawing himself into his own inner sanctuary, worships God in quietness and silentness of spirit ; for Jeremy Taylor has said that every man may have an altar of sacrifice, and every foot of land he treads on the earth's surface may be consecrated ground. Herein he wanted—and Carlyle has done this eminently—to revive every man's attention to the soul within him,—that hidden life within, which is a higher, nobler, more important life than the outer one. Mark how men forget this. If they sit down to write the biography of anyone, they are most careful to tell the day, nay, the hour of his birth ; whether he was a sickly child or a strong one, they will give you all the little facts of his outward life ; but these are the mere accidental circumstances of his life ; what we cannot see is really the true life of the man ; these are the parts of a man's life which we cannot hope to know ; it does not lie within the reach of the biographer to know the man,—what he did of choice, and what he did of necessity ; what he felt and what he thought. Every man should mentally, if not in form, keep an account of the weather of the soul. We take heed of the clouds that come over the fair face of the atmosphere, but few are wise enough to watch the weather of the soul ; to see the clouds and mark whence they come ; to feel the cold winds that chill us, and to know their cause ; and to give thanks for those warm airs of the spirit when, having done what is right, we feel ourselves not happy, but, what is far better, blessed. How is this neglect of the soul brought about ? Because men have taken latterly to worship the outer circumstance. The high road to worship in this country is to get rich. Let a man get rich, and let him be knave or fool, he is in

a certain degree to be respected; he hath a *status* in society and a place. We would teach men the sublime lesson that, in order to ascend, we must first descend. If we wish to strike a hard blow with a soft thing we must first depress it. All true nobleness comes of self-renunciation, whereas our moderns attempt too much and glide into self-sufficiency. Thus in this country men have too often forgotten the nobleness of their position, and have neglected their duty, to the waste of their time and the embitterment of their temper, because they cannot realise those things which they are foolishly taught to look upon as the *summum bonum* of human life. When a man is taught thus to worship the outward; when he is brought up in a due veneration of the accidental in life, he comes to be too modest; to be, in short, mock-modest; thinks that his soul goes for little worth, because, perchance, the body, in which it dwells, may not be well clothed, or the house in which he shelters may not be of a good order. But we are changing in this respect; our working and poorer classes—thanks to the poets that are born and bred among us—understand the injunction “Honour all men.” Burns, in those words that ought to be honoured of men in all ages, “A man’s a man for a’ that,” uttered sentiments which teach that royal hearts are working beneath ragged robes, and which show, that sometimes in the lowest is to be found the noblest; that forth from the lowly, God calls the highest; and that the world’s organization never came from the outwardly great men, but from those whose greatness of the inner spirit was hidden by the littleness of its outward development. These circumstances of the outward rank of a man, are, in Carlyle’s phrase, only the clothes which his soul or spirit may wear.

II.

These doctrines, taught as they must or should be to every man in this land, are charged with being revolutionary, overthrowing, and subversive; as making young men too forward; as stirring up a spirit of discontent in the lower orders; and we must note this as one charge brought against our author. Very piteous are the Jerimiads uttered, that there is no such thing as getting good servants now-a-days; and very piteously too, do some attribute to

the fact of men being able to write and read, that there is no man to be trusted ; and a large part of the conversation in private society consists of a catalogue of woes, of wrongs done to masters by their workmen, or of wrongs suffered by mistresses at the hands of their housemaids. It is said that the lower classes of this country are getting insubordinate ; that now there is no such thing as governing or ruling them. If that be true, whose fault is it ? Whose fault is it that when the blind man gets his sight, he sees things indistinctly ? To whom was the blame due that the blind man, when restored to sight, should have seen “men as trees walking” ? Was the blame due to the curer or to the disease ? If men do not see their duties clearly, whose is the blame ? The finger that touches them to open their long-darkened eyes, or the long darkness in which they have been kept ? Is it the blame of the prophet or the seer, who revives their knowledge of the old lights ; or is it the blame of an idle and ignorant age that locked them up in darkness ? As to all this lamentation and abuse, I expect it, and rejoice in it ; for it is a sign of brighter things to come. There must be, in what the geologists call a transition state, a breaking up of the old landmarks. I have never seen an old house pulled down in order to build a new one, without much dust accompanying the operation. People are obliged to get rid of the old house before they can build the new one on its site, and these insubordinations are the necessary dust, caused by taking down the venerable structure of the ignorance, the superstition, the tyranny, and the domination of the age that is past. Just bide your time a little, and the dust will settle of itself ; and when you hear the talk and the clamour raised on the one hand against the lower classes, do not forget that, as in other discords, there is a little blame due to both sides. When, again, we hear complaints against servants, and it is said the masters or mistresses are not to blame, that the whole fault is in the people : it is not so. These things we say, to explain why the teaching of these doctrines of individualism, of the divinity of the soul of man, of the soul of man being a key by which to explain all things, past, present, and to come, why such doctrines cause for a time something like confusion, and of necessity cause something like arrogance or want of respect. You keep a man locked up and fettered long ; then give him his freedom, and perchance you will

find that in the first few hours of his liberty he will abuse it. Yours is the fault, and not his.

Of Carlyle's "Life of Schiller" it is not necessary to say much. Schiller was one of the noblest of modern Germans, and it has always seemed to me one of Carlyle's caprices that he should prefer the cold, icy spirit of Goethe to the sublime soul of Schiller. He waked Germany as from a trance by the publication of that sublime drama, *The Robbers*, which sounded through the land like a trumpet, and from it is to be dated the dawn of that earnest spirit which now distinguishes that people. He was one of those men who redeem the office of the scholar, who have given utterance to the truth that the scholar and the student is a priest on the earth, that he comes to do a great work and to fulfil a noble avocation, not to supply the printer with copy or the public with a book to read that may amuse, but to teach men high and holy things, to stand between heaven and earth, to understand, by virtue of his genius, the sublime language of the other world, and to put it, by virtue of his office and power, into the lower language of the world that is. He stands, if he be a pious and a true heart, between God and the people; like Moses of old, it is for him to go up into the mountain and to receive the table of the commandments, and lovingly to bring it down in his arms to the people. Such are some of the great Germans. God has given them a soul to see far into the future; they are of those to whom the old Hebrew name shall be given, for they are *seers*; they walk by faith and not by sight; they have changed the face of the people, and they are fast changing the authorities of the world's veneration amongst us, and especially in the great and broad land of America. Suffice it that this work of Carlyle's is not very distinctive of him—does not bear his peculiar mark—but is a valuable contribution towards the life of Schiller—for it is not by any means a full, ample life of the man. Anyone desiring further information as to Schiller will see something in Bulwer's "Preface to his Translations," though that is not full and complete, but it gives to anyone who takes an interest in the life of that great German, much that will inform and gratify him.

Then Carlyle has translated Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," a book, one of the most singular I have ever read, and one that few Englishmen like, a book that novel readers take up under the

expectation that they have got a nice romance in three volumes, and they lay it down with a yawn. It is not a Minerva Press kind of book at all; you cannot get through it at a sitting; nor is it a book to lie on a sofa, with a headache from late hours, and glance over by way of light reading. It contains a deep thinker's views of some of the deep thoughts and things that relate to the peculiarities of modern life; made up here of a laugh, there of a weeping; here of a funeral, there of a birthtime and a marriage. It is motley and piebald, as a man's life must always be; but it will make people think if they will only read. Carlyle and Edward Irving have declared that it contains the best picture of Jesus Christ of any book after the Scriptures; and the sublimest criticism on any of Shakespeare's plays is contained in its notices of *Hamlet*. The play was not understood in this country (if it be fully understood yet) till this criticism was published. The book is translated well by one who thoroughly understands German, and who puts the original into a faithful form for the English reader. To comment longer on this work, however, would be rather to speak upon Goethe than upon Carlyle.

The next book of Carlyle's is his "Miscellanies;" a collection of papers published in reviews and magazines, and certainly one of the richest and raciest of Carlyle's works. To describe it fully would require me to talk all night. It contains papers on all the great Germans, on many English authors, and on many of the Frenchmen of the time of the revolution. Especially would I call attention to what Carlyle says of Robert Burns. He reviews his life, and puts him upon his proper level and footing; driving away those idle tales which the righteous-overmuch had gotten up against that noble heart; overthrowing the fabric of their falsehoods; exposing the hypocrites who went to seek out what was wrong in him, and to forget what was noble and true;—for the most righteous men are also and always the most merciful, and the man who is most conscious of his own faults, who is the most loyal and moral, will give most credit to others; and, if you examine the criticism of any country or time you will always find that those who are the severest upon their brother's faults, when you have gotten the chance of seeing their own inner life, are some of the most faulty themselves. Robert Burns, both in this article in the "Miscellanies," and in the "Hero Worship," has

his due given him by Carlyle, as one of the truest children of earth ; who went furthest into the realities of things, who suffered not his vision to rest upon mere externals, and was one of the foremost to teach this age the native dignity of man ; that every man is a great original fact ; to show that each of you walks upon God's earth, and that the great blue heavens and the glorious stars are next to you, with nothing between them and you ; that God and eternity are near enough to all of us ;— a remembrance which, if borne in mind, would long ago have checked the idle, foolish notions concerning the educational rights of the people, and other matters often discussed. For, strange to say, we yet meet at times with some of those thorough antediluvians, steeped in the spirit of the past, who appear to think a person is called upon seriously to entertain the question whether ploughmen, workmen, artisans, should be educated ; forgetting that God settled that question long ago ; that He bestows upon all men the knowledge of Himself, of eternity, the soul, and the resurrection of the body. And yet people go on questioning whether these men, upon whom God has bestowed so high a destiny, ought to learn a little geography and grammar, and some small facts about astronomy. For this is the light in which we must put many of the trumpety discussions on the education of the people. God has educated all mankind, and has given them a book, simple in style and statement, for their guidance and direction in the most solemn affairs of time and eternity. You are anxious that that book should be possessed by everyone ; but we have known those who have been leaders in attempts to put the Bible into the hands of the common people, and yet have thought it not right to put a pen into their hands. And this, though by their acts they are confessing that when God gave us the Bible, He founded a university in which every man might, if he desired it, take a degree in the sublimest knowledge in which the old seers were instructed. Is it not, then, a pitiful mockery for small men to enter in solemn, serious conclave, into such questions as whether a man, to whom the doctrine of the resurrection of the body has been revealed, should be instructed in the theory of physics, or should know anything about physiology or anatomy ;—whether a man to whom God has revealed the mystery of the world to come, in whose hand are the sublime rolls of prophecy, that he may

read from them and study the deep mysteries of the events crowding the political histories of all times,—whether he shall be instructed in history, or made acquainted with what we are pleased to call education, but what would be better called some little facts, contributive to education? This man Burns was one of those who led much to a changed spirit in our time, and to him Carlyle has done justice.

Another paper in the “Miscellanies” treats of Jean Paul, who was certainly one of the Germans whom we must, when we know him, love best; one who was not ashamed to eat and laugh heartily, and to pray earnestly and devoutly; who knew that religion does not consist in sourness of visage or longness of face, or in walking about God’s earth with crape on our faces that everything shall look dismal; one who knew that God bestows on man not only the power of weeping, but gave him also the power to laugh; one who learned to look upon laughter as something not to be condemned, but rather commendable, as a sign of a cheerful spirit. This was Jean Paul; a good, honest, hearty, upright, strong, earnest, pious man,—a man who worshipped his God and loved his brother; a man who could reveal the deepest thoughts, and who could rejoice and joke well. Religion has been made to talk so technically and to look so sour upon men, that they have come to look shy upon it and to dread it; it hath become a thing technical and commonplace, a thing lacking fresh air, and these great Germans,—simple, stout-hearted men,—they have taught to this age a lesson which I trust our young men will soon learn,—that a man may be religious, though he should be merry. There is a deep lesson in the old song, “Be merry and wise.” And what says the deep verity of the Christian Scriptures? It says of the Lord, that He “came eating and drinking:” yet men have forgotten this, and have changed the fair face of our religion into the countenance of a hard and sore task-master; have called this fair world of God, “a waste, howling wilderness;” forgetting that this would be a very beautiful world if men would not spoil it. Nay, and carrying out these mistaken and gloomy notions, they have come to talk of themselves as worthless and miserable worms, and of their souls as poor paltry nothings. The Word of God never said anything of the kind; but it has said that the soul is everything, and that everything

about it, as compared with it, is as nothing. What is the sun, what are all the worlds, compared with my soul? Christ said long ago, "what will a man give in exchange for his soul? or what shall it profit him if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" These Germans overthrow those debasing conceptions of the soul of man; they tell every man that he is a king, a great and high fact, the highest fact; they teach that religion and joyousness go hand in hand; that the world hath not lost its beauty, but that men have lost the sense by which to discern that beauty; and they show that, though cast out of Paradise, there is a possible return there. You will find "The Miscellanies" of Thomas Carlyle are as a vestibule to admit you into that broad and rich land of German literature, in which it will be both your pleasure and profit many a time to walk.

One of the earliest and most striking of Carlyle's works is the "Sartor Resartus," which may be considered a revelation of the interior life of a truly earnest and thoughtful man. When autobiography is written in a true spirit, it forms a most valuable contribution to self-knowledge and to the knowledge of human nature. We have had many kinds of autobiographies; some like that of Rousseau, written with an evident eye to effect, in which there are many things got up; others, again, like that of John Bunyan, describing the struggles through which the minds of earnest believers have been often called to pass, in reaching their belief. Of this latter class is this book of Carlyle's. The form into which he has thrown it, is both grotesque and picturesque. He summons up a certain eccentric German professor who dwells in a university town, which, as is sagely remarked by one of Carlyle's American reviewers, is not to be found in the map of Germany. This professor has undertaken to teach the great and important science of "Things in general." The first great lesson which you should learn from this book is the right treatment of the sceptic and the doubter. The usual method pursued, especially by the religious, is rather to anathematise than to attempt to convince; proceeding upon the assumption that unbelief is always wilful, and that scepticism is always a crime. For a man to be uncertain concerning any particular doctrine, is to run the risk of losing fellowship and kindness, and of being pronounced one of those who are dangerous and pestilent in society. If the conduct of

Christ in this matter be looked to, different, very different, will be our treatment of the doubter. Amongst His apostles He had one of the material school; one of those men who are not to be taken in; who believe nothing that has not occurred in their experience, or which is not revealed to them by their good five senses; a man with a supreme contempt for the supernatural; one who, when Peter told of a deserted sepulchre, an empty grave, would "believe none of these things," and demanded material evidence of a statement by no means in accordance with his previous experience. Christ meets him; instead of reproaching, He reasons with him; and "condescending" to this man "of low estate," He supplied him with the evidence which his peculiar constitution of mind, or his peculiar philosophy, demanded. "Reach hither thy finger," says Christ, "and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." It has yet to be understood that a man may be a religious doubter, a pious sceptic, and an earnest infidel; for surely it is religious to doubt, as long as a thing seems doubtful, it is pious to refuse to give the soul's assent to that which appears to the soul a lie. The firmest believers are those who have passed through the darkness of unbelief; for nothing so convinces, as the knowledge of a thing gained by having at one time doubted it. In this book of Carlyle's we have the autobiography of one who passes through a very "slough of despond." We are furnished with the process leading to this, and also with the road leading from it. The paramount idea of the work is to show how human ideas get themselves clothed upon with garments of circumstance, accident, and non-essential. These garments it becomes needful at times to remove, in order to restore the primitive ideas, which they have sometimes not only enveloped, but threatened, by their very weight, to kill and destroy. Hence, we are told to picture many of the great things which men are accustomed to worship, as deprived of their outward trappings. On one occasion of state, we are bidden by magic touch to cause the outward adornment to remove, and then to see what result. Imagine a coronation procession stripped of its outward clothing! Garments, churches, armies, all are regarded as the clothing in which certain great ideas of society do appear for us. In the course of the chapter headed "Aprons" we are told—"How much has been concealed, how much has been defended in aprons?"

Nay, rightly considered, what is your whole military and police establishment, charged at uncalculated millions, but a huge scarlet-coloured, iron-fastened apron, wherein society works (uncasily enough); guarding itself from some soil and stithy-sparks, in this devil's smithy (*Teufels-schmiede*) of a world? But of all aprons the most puzzling to me hitherto has been the episcopal or cassock. Wherein consists the usefulness of this apron? The overseer (Episcopus) of souls, I notice, has tucked in the corner of it, as if his day's work were done; what does he shadow forth thereby?"

After showing us the world clothed, we are bidden to look at the world out of clothes. We now follow the thinker through intellectual doubt and heart-sorrow, until he comes to that peculiar position which the author has called "The everlasting No," which is the negation of almost all the belief of early years, the loss of faith, the triumph of doubt, the true night and darkness of the spirit. This is the Slough of Despond itself. Prevented by an "after-light" of Christianity from committing suicide, our hero reaches the "centre of indifference," which is the turning point, where darkness begins to flee, and light appeareth; reminding us of the description given of the sun in a northern clime, where it has been watched in its downward course, then for a moment or two seen to stand still, and then to begin its upward eastern journey. The centre of indifference is this standing still of the sun of the soul. The central thought, upon which this revolution turns, is the idea of the Me,—a something different and other from the world without; a something holding power, able to conclude this doubtful state by an act of freedom, an act of suicide. This feeling of freedom, of self, of will, and of power, is the single idea upon which turns the salvation of the soul. Having shown us this, we are led again into the fair regions of belief. This single idea becomes the key to unlock the many problems of fate, destiny, and duty; and, by its kindly ministrations, the doubt is laid again, in an understanding of the great problem of life, coming at length into "The everlasting Yes;" which is duty clear, immortal, discerned, and the true influence of infinity and eternity felt upon human life. This is a rapid and imperfect key to the book. Its best interpretation must be gotten out of the interior life of those who have passed through such struggles, understood such doubts. To them the book will come thrice blessed, as showing how a maturer

mind than their own has had to struggle through the same darkness, has had to stoop before it could arise. And if friends have been chill, and the world has frowned, and the church has cursed,—with this book we may retreat, and find in it an interpreter of this inner life, and a guide into the land of light. One other lesson let us learn from the book,—to cherish the inner life of the soul; to take a high and noble view of its worth and importance; to see how, in truth, all the outward things are subordinate to this; how the fair face of nature can give little delight, if the light within be darkness. Let it teach those who doubt, to doubt on to the light; to submit to none of those smothering processes, so often recommended; to believe that no regimen of mere moral willing can prove effectual in overcoming those faults, which the very mystery of life, in certain minds, necessarily produces. Let us be careful always to maintain earnestness and sincerity; to search ever for the truth; to bide our time, believing that the darkness of the night is but the prelude to the coming dawn.

I must now pass on to the “Hero Worship,”—a book which exhibits one of the daring attempts of genius. In it we see a man, single-handed, unassisted, undertaking to reverse the sentence of the ages upon some of those whom he honours with the title of heroes. In these days, when men renounce their individuality, and can do nothing but by association, it is somewhat soul-refreshing to see a man set out, alone, to do that which historians, who should have known better, have neglected to do. This we consider one of the noblest works ever undertaken by genius. The importance of the object of “Hero Worship” cannot be over-estimated. Men must have their heroes; all must consent to worship more or less; and all dreams of democracy, republicanism, or equality, which would teach men that the day is to come when there will be no heroes or no governors, Thomas Carlyle has essayed to disprove. All equality dreams he shows to be idle dreams, and common sense might show this to anyone; for if to-night all could be reduced to a dead level of wealth, power, knowledge, &c., he who should rise at six instead of eight to-morrow morning would utterly destroy that level, provided he worked while others snored. So there can be no equality, in that sense, no level of the kind; they are but idle dreams invented by

demagogues to deceive and to ruin a people. With respect to these heroes, and the worship Carlyle says ought to be paid to them, they seem to serve like the rounds of Jacob's ladder, to lead men gradually up from the earth to the great Lord of the earth. In such sense they have their uses; and there is small fear that men, in giving worship to the heroes of the world, will neglect to give due reverence to the Maker of the heroes. The prime principle sought to be established by the book is, that no *sham* ever did live long in the world. He gives the lie to the accepted and registered judgments so long passed upon Mahomet and Cromwell. He takes the Prophet Mahomet, whom we were taught in our school-days to regard as an impostor, and the greatest hypocrite the world ever had,—a mean liar and deceiver. To reverse this decision, Carlyle has not laboured in vain. The accepted version of this man's character is mercilessly shown to be false, Carlyle proving him to have been a truthful, earnest, deep-hearted son of the desert, who achieved what he did by virtue of this earnestness, by virtue of his adherence to the truth of things, and to those sublime visions which visited his spirit. The great use of this attempt is to teach us that lesson, upon which Carlyle so often insists, that the world in the long run has not been duped, has not been imposed upon. All philanthropic exertions and attempts at political and social reform must be a labour of vexation and "vanity of vanities," could men be so easily duped and taken in. It cannot be believed that so many millions of our fellow-creatures have passed through this life under the guidance of such an unmitigated lie, as the life and writings of Mahomet are usually believed to be. We may learn from it the lesson that all creeds, parties, sects, have existed in this world rather by virtue of what truth there is in them, than by the falsehood or error they hold. When this principle is understood, miserable party spirit shall go far to become extinct; for the essence of all party spirit of the wrong kind is to believe that *it* is right, while all beside is unmitigated wrong; that *it* is sincere, and other men only pretend; that *it* is the true thing, and all others are but hollow and deceptive. This is a simple mode of getting rid of everything but our own belief,—to say that all else is a deception, a hollowness, and a sham. Now, if we can prove that all past creeds, political and social principles, have lived and flourished among men by virtue

of the truth in them, and not the falsehood, then have we gained a great point, and the reformer's prospect begins to get hopeful. The history of a new sect is easily understood. Power produces blindness; the dominant party, wedded to some particular truth, have neglected some other, and a protesting sect arises to supply the neglect, and to supplement the doctrine of those in power. The habit of looking at that truth alone, towards which our mental constitution is inclined, produces one-sidedness and partiality. The other side must be supplemented, the reverse supplied; and it rarely happens that men take an equally just view of both sides of any great question. Hence, perhaps, these differences are but the result of what the Apostle Paul says, "Now, we know in part, and we see in part." Mahomet taught some great neglected truths, revived faith in some forgotten verities, and surely did teach to his people a higher rule of life, and a nobler aspiration of the soul, than they had had before. Carlyle has taken the character of Mahomet, and shown, by a special attention to the neglected portions of his history, what a sincere and earnest child of the desert he was. He has brought up several beautiful facts of his life, which are quite other than the usual traits of deception and imposture. He proceeds with the hero under many other manifestations, and here is another great principle of the book, that there is but one spirit under diverse manifestations, that the same kingly, heroic, and royal spirit animated the old god Woden, the prophet Mahomet, the king, and the poet Burns, Johnson, and many other great men; that the same force was behind them,—energy, strong will, an earnest and a truthful heart.

It has been thought by some that the praise bestowed upon such men is dangerous, apt to subvert the strict rules of morality; but we have no such fear. None of us are in danger of becoming Mahometans, because the true elements of that man's character are indicated and admired. Such censure belongs to a weak and effeminate morality, not learned of nature and of life, in which we find small care taken to prevent us struggling through pain, trouble, and difficulty, in order to reach a high and safe position. Such censures belong to the hot-house school of life, in which they strive to raise us as delicate plants, from which are to be carefully excluded every biting wind, every genial beam, lest the one should

wither and the other burn ; a morality which deems *that* virtue which is but the negation of vice, and deems *that* strength which has never been tried. Strange contrast to those teachings which bid us “count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations.” The great lesson to be learned from this book is, the importance of true heroes and of true worship. It may always be said with truth, “Given the gods of a people, we can find the people.” The old worships of Rome and Greece show this. As the god, so will the worshipper become. With the demigods this, too, is true ; with the heroes, with whatever is worshipped or revered. This being the case, it is of the highest importance that an age have its heroes truly found. Nothing can be more needful than to define clearly who shall be worshipped ; who, not revered. The heroes whom men have honoured, have been too often little worthy of that rank ; and he who can give us a new race of heroes, who can uncrown the worthless and enshrine the noble, will thereby exercise upon the people an influence tending towards all which is true and worthy in those heroes themselves. To do this, Carlyle has shown us the hero spirit as exhibited under the many diverse manifestations of divinity, king, priest, poet, literary man, pointing out in all some great prominent characteristics, exhibiting their unity under divers forms, teaching us that there is one spirit, many manifestations. In them all, is to be discerned that earnestness which goes so far to make a great and heroic character ; that conformity to the truth of things which is the secret of their success.

It has been objected that Carlyle’s worship is too indiscriminate—that it appears to be a worship of blind force. Were this correct, it would but savour of that extreme into which a man who deeply feels a neglected truth is apt to push that truth, in order that it may be the more looked upon and regarded by those who have forgotten it. In a time when individual force and power have been resigned to associations, when hollowness and shamming have become so common, it is needful strongly to insist upon the ultimate triumph only of that which is real, earnest, and true. But this reproach I do not believe to be of much force or value. A recognition of the noble primary elements of a man’s character by no means obliges us to admire every act and deed of the man’s life. This very fault, if fault it be, is a

teaching of that true catholicism in which alone the cure of narrowness, bigotry, and party-spirit can be looked for. To discern the good and the true, in places previously deemed unlikely to exhibit it, is to show a clear sense of that goodness and beauty in the discoverer. Too often criticism has been the dissection of the unsound, teaching a sad lesson concerning the critic, for "like seeks like." The divining rod, when held by an untrue man, will always point to the untrue; but in the hands of a great spirit it will tell of nought but the sterling gold hidden beneath the earth's surface. To find, then, truth and beauty in the diverse men whom he has selected shows Carlyle himself to be good and true, and whosoever following Carlyle's guidance can with him see the admirable in the many heroes he gives us, may be sure that he too has mastered the understanding of what constitutes a noble character, if to worship the true is to be true, and to see the godlike is to be pure. It is not sufficient to worship mere force. The earthquake must then find its devotees, and the volcano should have a large number of worshippers around it. All these things should have their due respect, because they are a needful part of the world's history, but seeing that they are but the force of destruction and overthrow, and seeking nothing benevolent, there should be distinction made between the worship paid to them and to things benevolent in intention, in the mode of carrying them out, and in the fruits they have brought forth.

But these objections will be corrected if another of Carlyle's doctrines is considered—namely, that ultimately might and right are identical. At first this seems a strange proposition; men look round the world and see many unrighteousnesses that rule and are endured in it, many slaveries, much oppression and tyranny under which they groan, and it seems strange to be taught that might and right are identical. But if the former proposition be once carefully established—that men are not duped long, that hollow and false things are short-lived—then does it become developed that might and right are identical, because that which finally establishes itself is right: the hollow and false may live a little time, but that which does live long, and does much, must do it by virtue of its being right, for it has the might, and God has ordered it that nothing but the right shall have the full and final might in it. This doctrine is needful for the reformer to

understand, and satisfactory when he has understood it, for it teaches that whatsoever wrong is in the world has got its verdict of departure written upon it ; it teaches men to look little for the outward might, while it brings us to the old doctrine that the right thing, the due thing, what a man owes—duty—is the one sole and only thing about which a man should concern himself. To do the due thing, or the right thing, is to do the mighty thing ; for if the world be so ordered that finally the mighty thing shall triumph, and that nothing is truly mighty but the right thing—he who does the due thing, or the duty, the owed thing, or the obligation—is the conqueror, the mighty man. Carlyle shows us, then, under the diverse forms which the hero and the heroic spirit has taken, that in having might they have, more or less, right.

With respect to the objection brought against Carlyle, of the undue worship of force, it must also be remembered that the majority of men are not subjected to the rights of trial of which he speaks. There are two judgments to which men should be subject,—that of their peers, and that of their superiors. Now, in blaming men, the true and generous spirit will always try them by their peers. If I wish to settle what measure of blame is due to a man of the past age, I must not try him by the principles of the present day. If I wish to show what position Socrates should take, I must not drag him up and try him by the New Testament. That would not be trying him by a judgment of his peers, but of his superiors. Take this as a rule in all historic judgment : when you wish to understand what blame is due to a man, try him by the Shaster, the Avesta, or the Spirit he worshipped, and not by *your* times, morality, Scripture, or laws. But if the question be what place he shall take in the great Valhalla of the world, what niche he shall occupy among the true spirits, what place he shall take in the heaven of history, then must he consent to be tried by his superiors ; because it is to be settled what place that man must take in the great gathering and church of the blessed ones of all time, and he must be tried by an abstract, absolute law, by his superiors, by the old and eternal law of right and wrong, as embodied in the best transcript of it that can be found for us. The absurdity of many of the usual judgments passed upon such men is, that they are tried by a standard which they never had ; sentenced by a law to which they were never

amenable ; executed for not obeying a precept which they never heard. Carlyle shows, in respect to Mahomet, that he had a true and an earnest heart ; that because he did not teach Christianity, it does not follow that he taught an unmitigated lie ; that because he had not our book to reverence, it does not follow that the book he gave out had nothing reverenceable in it.

This book on hero-worship, in common with Carlyle's historic works, has the singular beauty of making all these heroes live and move before us. We are not presented with a set of fleshless abstractions, but have the very men living again before our eyes. And this is done by the ability to supply the whole man, from a knowledge of some of his deeds, thoughts, and words. A marked change has come over our historic works of late. Instead of dry narratives, furnished by the school histories of our childhood, we have now the dramatic form. This change has been attributed sometimes to Walter Scott, who summons up the actual men of the past, and makes them live. But it has been better done by Carlyle, who does not strive to give us a finished picture, losing its power by its very finish, leaving nothing for the imagination to do, because so elaborated ; but, like the sketch of a great master, teaching as much by what it leaves out as by what it supplies,—for it is a principle true here, that where the imagination has nought to do, mental impression will be comparatively weakened. Look around your Pantheon, and see by whom its many niches are filled ; and question yourselves whether you are rendering “honour to whom honour is due.” Should you find any false hero enshrined there, I trust you will as speedily as may be remove him, to give place to some of those truthful spirits by whom humanity has been blessed and the truth taught,—some of those great ones, “of whom,” it is said, “the world was not worthy.”

III.

I will now pass on to what may be called the applied science of Carlyle's writings. I have seen, in a certain review concerning the “Chartism” of Thomas Carlyle, that “they are surprised he should come down into the arena of political discussion, and thus put all his reputation at stake.” Mournful sentence, that a man should stake his reputation by applying his wisdom to some

goodly purpose in life ! But this is the cant of an age of criticism fast departing, which has held that to apply science is not dignified, but that to dream away life in abstractions, that neither bless the dreamer nor anyone for whom he is dreaming, is worthy of renown. I hold with Algernon Sidney, that the two things worthy of a man's study are religion and politics ; when they are gone almost everything is gone worthy of studying. With respect to art, science, and literature, unless we have religion and politics around which to group them, we can scarcely class them higher than amusements. Life is too short for such matters, and though it is needful that every age should have men devoting themselves to one particular science, yet they should do it with a view to its being applied by other thinkers to some benefit and blessing to be bestowed upon their fellow-men. Instead of Carlyle's risking his reputation by applying his knowledge to political reform, I think he first made his reputation then. For surely a man is noble when he begins to do the work of humanity, to plead for the oppressed, to speak for the lowly, and those who are dumb and have no tongue to speak for themselves ; when he descends from his high philosophic chair of abstraction, where he found "audience fit, though few," amongst the esoteric spirits of his time, to wield a very Hercules' club against the serpents, giants, and other monsters by which society is oppressed. I am not about to inflict upon you anything that the laws of your society will necessarily shut out ; but it is mournful that in this free land, in this age, foremost in the rules of the discussion and debating societies of our Athenæums and Mechanics' Institutions, it is found needful to write "Religion and Politics not discussed here." To my mind it is one of the weakest and puniest symptoms of a puny age. What is there well worth wasting time about when these two things are shut out. What care the poor for our nice discussions about optics, &c. ? The great blunder (and I say it in kindness) made by Mechanics' Institutions in this country is in supposing that after fourteen or sixteen hours' work in a factory or mill, a man will get home, and having washed his face and reduced himself to a proper state of cleanliness, will come to hear some man discuss concerning the refraction of light, friction, and other matters, useful in their proper place. No ; working men are not interested in such things yet. They will come together

to hear the duty of life explained, to hear what are the rights and the duties of government; *eighteen* hours' work will not prevent them from coming to hear that. I would be bound for experimenting in any town in this kingdom, inhabited by working men, to gather them together at an evening lecture upon points of politics, morality, and religion, after any number of hours' work, when optics, botany, and bits of other sciences should fail to get a room half full. Why do I complain of this excluding rule? Because it seems to say that Englishmen are not manly enough to differ yet. Why are these things shut out? "For fear," it is said, "men should get excited and angry." As if there was any harm in excitement at any time! It is a sickly sentimentality that talks against excitement. Why, life is one history of excitement,—the excitement of the finite striving to understand the infinite; the excitement of the man limited striving to work in spite of those limits. The day will come soon when these things will be altered, but seeing such are the laws we must for the present conform to them.

I am going to inflict no party politics upon you, for I love them not. It is a sad scene in English society, that the sublime science of politics, as understood by the great Greeks and our forefathers, has died out amongst us; and if nine men out of ten were asked what politics means, their talk would be of newspapers, elections, and lists of parliamentary majorities—of material interests rather than of spiritual, of men more than principles. This, however, is not what I mean when I talk of politics. By politics, I mean the whole rights of man in a social state, the rights of the governors and the governed, and the right of the governed to be governed wisely and well; the whole well-being of man social. Another great evil amongst us is the separating of men into a great number of spheres, making religion, politics, &c., technical things. There are certain buildings in which a man can be religious, and others in which he can not. Politics and religion are things of latitude and longitude; things of garment; holiday garments to be put on on certain days of the week, and then laid aside, until the turn of the day brings them into requisition and use again. In respect to this, I would recommend you to read Emerson's lecture on "Man Thinking," in which he draws a very settled and clear distinction between "man a thinker," and "man thinking," showing that there ought to be no

thinkers, but that every man ought to be thinking. Thinking must not be made a profession, but it is the first prime duty of every one of us ; so shall we get rid of the nonsense of there being a profession of politics. In a free country, everybody should be professed politicians ; everyone should be grateful to God for putting him in a free land, and should show his gratitude by making use of the blessing. It is as absurd for men to live in a free country and refuse to take part in its management, as for a man with the power to eat refusing to exercise it. If a man lives under the English constitution, it is to enjoy the blessings that constitution has put him in possession of ; if he lives in a free country, it is to be a freeman. And my advice—oft repeated, but yet here to be repeated once more—is, to all those good, quiet, and easy souls, who, under any pretence whatsoever (whether in not liking excitement, love of peace, or religion), say a man has no business to mix in politics—to take the first shipment they conveniently can, and to bestow themselves into some of the broad lands of the Emperor of Russia, where their political duties will get narrowed down very considerably and quickly, and their whole duty will be just to be quiet, and believe the Emperor to be the best incarnation of all that is true, wise, noble, and generous, the world ever had.

This book, “Chartism,” starts with a chapter on the “Condition of England question,” and Carlyle goes on curiously to show, that in this country we have had all manner of questions but this one ; we have inquired into everything but into the not very simple and slight matter—the condition of the people. Here is the great question of the times. I care not what politics men are of, the condition of the people must be inquired into ; it is the duty of the people to inquire into that condition ; whether they are high Tory, Whig, or Radical, it is pressed upon their attention that this question must be examined into. Carlyle goes on to show that rebellions, chartist riots, mill burning, strikes, and insurrections, are seldom wisely treated, because men do not see that they are indications of something beneath. Too often, rebellion or a riot is an indication of a disease ; but having removed or repressed the symptoms, there is no trouble taken to cure the blood from which it sprang. This is one of the fatalisms ; they look upon rebellion as if men rebelled for the sake of rebellion ; they

look upon a strike as a sort of ebullition of ill temper, which ought to be treated as a child sulking, that the sulk is to be put down by a carefully bestowed sugar lump, or reduced to a muttering quietness by a due application of birch. Men do not rebel for the sake of doing it, they strike or rebel to show that they are wronged. Carlyle shows that men will bear almost anything but an injustice. All of us can put up with hunger, and famine, and illness, but injustice is a thing that the soul of man cannot long bear, and which it is not intended he should long bear. The book shows that all strikes and rebellions should be regarded as symptoms of disease. The symptom may be treated and got rid of, but instead of merely doing that we should go deeper and attempt to get rid of the disease. Carlyle points to the Chartist movement of the people, as indicating a great discontent in the people, a sense of injustice or wrong. He proceeds to show that the injustice or wrong must sooner or later get looked into. He treats the doctrine, that the government should let the people alone, as an absurdity; and I would warn any who are deeply imbued with Democracy, that in this book they will find many unpleasant things; for he teaches that democracy is nothing but a reduction of the world to a vacuum, in order to start fresh and fair again. It would be well if all of us would look into this point. The assertion seems startling, and what Carlyle urges is, the necessity that the people should always have guides and governors; that the less educated men must always seek guidance from the better educated, and that the great problem we should try to solve is, "How shall governance and guidance be best supplied?" With respect to the Church, Carlyle has several curious things to say. He says it *professes* to be a guidance, and that the friends of the Church should look and see whether or not it is truly guiding the people. With a vein of sardonic humour that besets this man at times, he ventures to suggest whether Birmingham might not supply a few "cast-iron preachers." There is something significant about this—it is at least a very unpleasant insinuation which it becomes the order of the clergy to look into, and ask what he means by suggesting that the day has come when we may have cast-metal pastors. With respect to kings, he makes his great German professor to laugh but once; and then he laughs because Jean Paul suggests whether it may not be desirable to look out

for some "cast-metal kings." These things may look absurd, but they are significant, because they teach us that one of the greatest thinkers dares to insinuate that a great deal of kingship or governance, and churchship or guidance, is now no governance or guidance, its vitality having gotten out of it, and that it would be a salvation, if preaching for the future were done by steam, or if governing were done by some cast-metal organisation.

A thing that will strike one early in the book is the contempt poured upon much that is called Political Economy : and here he does but verify what I have stated before, that these bare and barren sciences can do little for men. I am sorry to say it, but it is my belief, that a large part of what has passed for political economy is just anything but worthy a man's reasoning or attention. It is an attempt to negative a large part of our nature, and to reduce the infinite soul of man to some algebraic formula, by which a man, taking his Ready Reckoner out of his desk, may settle the affairs of the nation at once—tell exactly the state of a people, and how they should be governed. Carlyle has a great contempt for Statistics, as too often used, when a man attempts to establish everything by statistics. Are the people religious? The books of different chapels and churches are examined, and it is pronounced that so many people attend this place or that on a Sunday, and so many do not. Are the people moral? A list is made out of the amount of gin drunk, or prisoners committed, and according to these they are pronounced moral or not. The opinion of Carlyle with respect to statistics is that they are a "net and a snare to men." Statistics have their uses, but when applied to that which is not measurable by a formula they are wrong; they may be indications, but they are not the thing. They may be used as an approximation to a fact, but any attempt to settle the condition of the poor by statistics must be empty, hollow, deceptive and vain. Speaking of Ireland he says:—

"There is one fact which statistic science has communicated, and a most astonishing one, the inference from which is pregnant as to this matter. Ireland has near seven millions of working people, the third unit of whom, it appears by statistic science, has not for thirty weeks each year as many third-rate potatoes as will suffice him. It is a fact perhaps the most eloquent that was ever written down in any language at any date

of the world's history. Was change and reformation needed in Ireland? Has Ireland been governed and guided in a 'wise and loving' manner? A government and guidance of white European men which has issued in perennial hunger of potatoes to the third man extant ought to drop a veil over its face, and walk out of court under conduct of proper officers, saying no word, expecting now of a surety sentence either to change or die. All men, we must repeat, were made by God, and have immortal souls in them. The sans-potato is of the self-same stuff as the super-finest Lord Lieutenant. Not an individual sans-potato human scare-crow but had a life given him out of heaven, with eternities depending on it for once and no second time. With immensities in him, over him, and round him; with feelings which a Shakespeare's speech would not utter, with desires illimitable as the autocrat's of all the Russias! Him various thrice-honoured persons, things, and institutions have long been teaching, long been guiding, governing, and it is to perpetual scarcity of third-rate potatoes, and to what depends thereon, that he has been taught and guided. Figure thyself, O high-minded, clear-headed, clean-burnished reader, clapt by enchantment into the torn coat and waste hunger-lair of that same root-devouring brother man!"

Now this passage is, after all, one of the most significant in the book, and much to be thought upon. That these men are to be looked upon as infinite and eternal, as brethren, and then to reflect that all our governing, guiding, praying, preaching, teaching, has brought them to this state, that they cannot get third-rate potatoes for thirty weeks out of the fifty-two. This comes home to each of us, for it is an evil partly within the cure of each one.

What does he recommend each one to do but to cultivate themselves, their sphere, their degree of knowledge; to become true men, and to do whatsoever of labour may lie around them? Many strive only to get through life in the most respectable way possible, but the doing anything for this starved and oppressed people has never occurred to them. It is scarcely right people should be in this earth of God's except to make it better, for the men of other ages have toiled for us, and it becomes us to toil for those who must come after us. He would have all men to be toilers and workers; and by every man's toiling on part of this

great earth of God's, by teaching the true thing, and acting to it, showing that no truth is possessed by a man for himself. And here our Scriptures teach us a great lesson, for they represent a man as but a steward, holding for the good of all; as a trustee to hold property, not for himself, but for other men. This doctrine, as to *property*, is sometimes well explained and enforced; but with respect to knowledge, it is much neglected. Hence men spend many studious years in accumulating learning, but none become the wiser for it except themselves. Hence so few able to appreciate education, and therefore not regarding it and its teachers with respect. For in this country to become an educator is to enter one of the worst paid and least respected ranks or professions of society. Modern English people, if they are reduced in circumstances, the first place where they begin to pinch and screw is the schoolmaster's bill. Yet they are an enlightened people, very much alive to the importance of knowledge; and, as Carlyle puts it in one of his books, he has never yet seen a place in which it would be desirable for an educator to walk abroad with his educating tools by his side, while it is highly honourable to a soldier to strut about the streets with his butchering tools by his side. A sword is honoured, where a pen is sneered at. The schoolmaster is one of the drudges of society; and, while other men, of whose uses it would be unpleasant and difficult to say a true opinion just now, get themselves honoured, the schoolmaster is scorned. These are matters within the cure of each one of us; to settle these on another basis, to show that we understand the spiritual and the true reform, lies in the hands of all and every one of us.

It is in this book, "Chartism," that the doctrine of rights and might is best expounded. He says, "If men can get themselves to feel a thing inevitable, they cease to quarrel with it," and he tells us that "an expedition was fitted out against the *Simoom* or south wind, but there were never two expeditions, because men found it was not to be put down; it was one of those things not to be got rid of." Again, he puts it very strongly—"If men had lost belief in a God, their only resource against a blind no-god, of necessity and mechanism, that held them like a hideous world-steam-engine, like a hideous Phalaris' bull, imprisoned in its own iron belly, would be, with or without hope—*revolt*. They could,

as Novalis says, by a 'simultaneous universal act of suicide,' *depart* out of the world-steam-engine, and end, if not in victory, yet in invincibility, and unsubduable protest that such world-steam-engine was a failure and a stupidity."

This is a thing to be thought upon, supposing all men were to agree to depart out of the world by suicide; but the fact that men cannot be got to agree, proves that they have yet left the last gift of hope; they believe something better is to come towards them. That hope sustains them, and shows there is a dim belief that right and might shall ultimately be proved to be one and the same. The doctrine which Carlyle calls "*Laissez faire*," or leaving the world alone, he proves will not do; that men demand from us governance and guidance. The problem is, how shall we get an aristocracy? and here, of course, there is much idle talk in all political meetings, men not thinking that even in a democratic form of government, *some* aristocracy must exist. The question is not whether this political aristocracy or that is good, but how shall we find the best aristocracy? The book but suggests a number of problems, and this is one: "Given the number of inhabitants in a city, how should it find its best men?" He goes on to speak, also, of cash payment being the only means or bond of political science, in modern times, and leaves it as a suggestion, whether or not this is right; and to this, modern science has brought us. It will be seen in many books that the great end of government is to protect property. Carlyle puts the matter beautifully, when he says—

"Another thing, which the British reader often reads and hears in this time, is worth his meditating for a moment: that society 'exists for the protection of property.' To which it is added, that the poor man also has property—namely, his 'labour,' and the fifteenpence or three-and-sixpence a day he can get for that. True enough, O friends, 'for protecting property;' most true: and indeed if you will once sufficiently enforce that eighth commandment, the whole 'rights of man' are well cared for; I know no better definition of the rights of man. *Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not be stolen from*: what a society were that; Plato's Republic, More's Utopia mere emblems of it! Give every man what is his, the accurate price of what he has done and been, no man shall any more complain, neither shall the earth suffer any

more. For the protection of property, in very truth, and for that alone!"

Hence, in the commencement of "Past and Present" we are presented with a picture in this country, of a number of able-bodied men unable to work, and Carlyle pronounces this to be the most unjust, wicked, and ruinous sight this world has ever yet produced. He is a great upholder of the strict old law, that those who will not work shall not eat; and the most merciful and righteous man is justified in putting it to the *outrance*. If a man will not work, let him be starved out: but it must be considered how it is that willing workers are not able to work; whether this patent government—as quiet and as good as it seems—whether, in protecting the property of the rich, it does not enable the poor man to put his little property—his strong arm, his able hand, his willing spirit—to put that property out to interest, whereby he may gain life, or the means of living. How is it that, under an enlightened Government, men can be found willing to work and yet unable to find work? Another great lesson he teaches, and one which, in political matters, ought to be learned—is, that the true reform of politics, and everything else, is more in getting a right spirit, than in an over-attention to getting the right form. It is perfectly possible that a political reform may come a great deal sooner than it is wanted. There have been such cases in history. This may seem paradoxical: but a few enlightened men may produce a change, for which the spirit of the people is not prepared; and what is the consequence? If the two spheres of life, the inner and the outer, do not fit one another, there must be hollowness and decay. Such a man is said to be hollow, what does that mean? That the true life of the man does not exactly fit his profession. A man professes a thing; but, unfortunately, he has not the thing there. There is a full circle of profession, and an inferior or broken circle of reality. Where the inner circle does not exactly fit the outer, when such a man is tapped, it is said that he sounds hollow, he is hollow-hearted. This may be illustrated by reference to a nut: if the kernel within fills up the shell, if the shell has grown around the kernel, there will be no hollowness, because the internal life, the kernel, will be exactly expressed by the external life, the shell. If the kernel is shrivelled, and not full grown, then there is hollowness because the shell is not filled up by the internal life. Such

is the way with man. Apply the same thing to politics; people may be found with a very fair outside appearance, but the spirit, the kernel, is wanting. This may teach all men a great lesson, to get the spirit and the truth; forms always take care of themselves. The spirit is the centre, and when that is filled, it is quite certain the circumference will take good heed of itself; circumferences having been generally in the habit of getting accommodated to centres. The true political reform which Carlyle advocates, is not so much the loud clamouring against any particular thing, but the incessant struggle to change the spirit of the thing.

This is borne out by the philosophy of the Christian verity. It must have struck some of you that Jesus Christ never said anything about political abuses; concerning slavery, we never detect any speech that has fallen from his lips. He never protested against absolute government, and the abominations by which men in his day, and in ours, have been trodden down. And why so? Because he put down this great truth,—change the spirit, and the thing will go. All ghosts get themselves away when the morning star arises: his doctrine was the morning star,—“I am the light of the world;” get the light of the world and the ghosts and hideous spectres must vanish away. Get the spirit of a man right, and you rectify everything in the man. Hence the sublime doctrine of the Scriptures, when they speak of converting the inner life of a man. Change that and all is changed. Teach the soul of a man, and all the outward circumstances, doing, everything, thinking, speaking, dressing, all will change. Hence comes in the sublime scriptural doctrine that a man is born over again, starts life afresh with a new soul. And what matters it quibbling that the body is the same, if in that body a new spirit, a new soul, a new man, hath gotten? This is the philosophy taught as the true Christian reform:—Earnestly labour to convert the people; to alter their way of looking at life; change the soul of the people by incessant teaching of the upright, noble, and true, by incessant education, and remember that it is a noble people that makes a noble government, and not a noble government that makes a noble people.

One of the great blunders into which we are apt to fall is making by far too much of government; a great deal of politics is concerned in the upsetting or forming of governments; in fact,

many have reversed the order of things, and government, which is but the expression of the soul, has got to be the soul; and this is the fruit of absolute and such other governments that the people, the soul of the thing, are made to bow down to the government, the expression of the thing. Some will object to this doctrine, and say, "Are we to carry on no crusade against an unjust law? Are we to let the laws remain as they are till we get a righteous people?" Truths at first seem paradoxical, but generally harmonise when fully looked into. The same is said of religion, "It is of no use to make men temperate if they are not first made religious." It is a great mistake that. Before Christ John the Baptist came, to make a way for the Lord,—to level the mountains, to bring up the plains, to make a straight path for His feet. Such are the crusades of modern times in politics; they go before the true reform of the people, to make straight their path. Crusades against any particular evil—capital punishments, or whatever else—this is not the final reform, the making a people righteous and noble, but a smoothing of the highway along which the great car of humanity will roll. Let no man be industrious, and no way is made. Every bad law is a large stone in the road, and every one gotten out of the path is much done. Rest never in educating, in teaching men to read and write, for it is perfectly possible to make a blackguard do both, and to make a housebreaker discuss latitude and longitude. This must be looked to, and the sphere of outer reform must not be mistaken for the true sphere of inner or spiritual reform. A bad law should be cleared out of the way, in order to make ready for a future development; but the best exertions of a man's life ought to be given to the inner soul of a people, to the change of the spirit of the people. Take it as a principle laid down by Carlyle that governments are the expression of the people, that a righteous people and an unrighteous government cannot exist. And men should remember that every wrong thing in government is a sentence passed upon themselves. The free cannot be ruled by a tyrant. It is because men are base that a foot is put upon them. If the people find themselves at any time in slavery, let them see whether they are not somewhat slave-like. If they are oppressed it is a two-edged verdict that shows something oppressible; when a man is bound, it shows there is something there able to be bound. This brings us to

Carlyle's favourite doctrine—to reduce man to himself, and to show him that it is useless to clamour about government and reform without if there is not reform from within. If he has not reformed himself, how shall he be able to reform another? “Physician, heal thyself,” is as true in politics as in religion; and it teaches us that all political reform lies at the heart, whether or not the laws for which we clamour have been carried out in our own sphere. Singular bipeds present themselves to the student of natural history at times; and it has been our fate to meet with such: loud criers out for liberty in public, carrying out the tyrant and domineering at home.

It is these lies, shams, and hypocrisies, that do so much harm. It is in vain to preach harmony and Christianity, if it is to be undone by the perpetration of so many living lies before us. The greatest lie of all in this country is to call this people a Christian people, and to see on our law-book that there are unchristian laws; for the great reason why the mass of people in this country are not religious, is because they are too shrewd to be taken in. When they hear proclamations, by Act of Parliament, of the goodness of religion and the propriety of reading the Bible, and when people come forth, recommending them to subscribe for the conversion of the heathen, while there are so many heathen among themselves, who for thirty weeks out of the fifty-two have not potatoes,—they are apt to say, “Physicians, heal yourselves,” “By their fruits we will know them,” “Thou can’st not hold up this thy faith, and treat me so; if you believed the religion of Christ and the Bible, you would not serve me so;” and this is the secret of the loss of religious influence over the working classes. They are well able to try the religious by their own books, and find them wanting. This thing, therefore, is open for men to do: to understand that the great problem of this age is the applied science of Christianity. We understand pretty fully what Christianity can do for a single man. But, as the late Dr Arnold thought, the problem still remains, “What can Christianity do for a nation?” It should be asked by all true thinkers, “How is it that, with Christianity amongst us, we are governed by so many unchristianities?” This, it is high time to begin to think and speak about. Side by side with the luxurious homes of the rich, there are places for the poor, in

which the rich man would not suffer his beasts to dwell ; for, as Carlyle says, "There is not a horse willing to work but can get food and shelter in requital ; a thing this two-footed worker has to seek for, to solicit occasionally in vain." Mark that this occurs in a very Christian country, in the nineteenth century ; in an enlightened country in which there are discharged every year between three and four millions of sermons, concerning the precepts and principles of the Christian faith. This is not party politics, but the politics which every true man should investigate ; and I care not now how you essay to cure the diseases—whether by becoming more aristocratic or more democratic ; if you cure them, you do right. All Carlyle strives to do is to get the people deeply to feel these things, to get them graven in their souls. He would make these things live like fire-characters—like the writing on the wall before Belshazzar, which forbade him to sleep until some great and wise man was brought forward to read the characters, and tell the meaning of them. Think of this, a Christian country in the nineteenth century, with millions-sermon-power going on within it—horses well fed, and houses over their heads, groomed and cared for,—and men dying of starvation, uninstructed ; dying as a criminal did in this country not long ago, who, before he was hung, had the cup of the holy communion put into his hands, which he received with right good will ; and, lifting it up, he wished good health to all around. He had not so much as heard of the cup of the New Testament in Christ's blood, but in perfect good faith drank it to the bottom, thinking it was a parting cup of good-fellowship. The office of showing these things is not a pleasant one, but if men will sleep they must be awakened ; and when people sleep soundly, it is sometimes necessary to shake them somewhat roughly, and many of these unpleasanties Carlyle has uttered may seem like an untimely calling out of sleep.

IV.

I NOW pass on to the book called "Past and Present," which is a remarkable work, showing the great power of the artist, to take an old, musty, and dry record of an ancient time, and make it stand up before us, life-like and warm. The book is founded upon an old Latin MS. published by a learned society, giving an

account of sundry matters which happened in a monastery several hundred years ago. The Latin itself is the driest and crabbedest belonging to the Dry-as-dust school, a piece of good antiquarianism; a true and veritable mummy, having nothing modern or vulgar about it. But then comes the great artist, who brings the men down from their den and puts life in them, and instead of a mummy we are presented with a living and a moving thing. I remember no case in literature in which the power of genius has been more shown than in causing Abbot Samson to move before us. And this is done, not so much by supplementing anything or imagining anything, but by looking to the little things in the old MS., and having the power of a Cuvier to solve the problem:—"Given, a joint of a beast's tail, to tell what the beast was." This is possible; for the great masters in anatomy can speedily tell, from any bone, the order and genus and habits of the creature; and as in some of the beautiful indications of modern geology, we can tell the habits of the beast by the inspection of some few joints of its body, in things moral and historical the same can be done by a great genius. Give him some drawing of the man and he can tell something; give him two or three facts or thoughts, let him hear a few speeches of this man, and he can proceed to sketch his lineaments. This Carlyle has done in an eminent degree; he took some deeds, some dry speeches of the man, and produced a living picture. This was effected by an intense study of man. He saw that, in the majority of cases, such actions followed such a feeling; that such a movement of the countenance indicated such an internal feeling; so that if the outward movement was given the inward feeling could be known. How Carlyle has presented us with the internal life of this old monastery! We see the monks before us; the election day is coming on; who shall be their abbot? and their great difficulty is, to find out their true abbot. We have a picture of the man striding away from the monastery, in order to go up to the king upon certain matters concerning it.

It will be asked, "What is the use of reviving all this?" I remember two verdicts which have been passed upon this book. One says, if all that antiquarian stuff were left out, it would be good; and the other says, the only things beautiful in it are these long antiquarian episodes. But what is the use of masquerading?

Simply, that a man with a mask may do many things, which a man cannot do without a mask. Dr Johnson said, if a man would get a good character for eccentricity when young, he might sit in an easy-chair the rest of his life. Somewhat on this principle Carlyle puts on this masquerading. People will let curious truths in under a mask. I, in lecturing, always strive to take people in! By lecturing on Carlyle's works or any other subjects, I am striving to inculcate great principles which I think needful for the people's well-being. I regard this as my wooden horse which I get within the walls of Troy, but out of which I cause to issue as many armed men as I can, to do fight against prejudices and customs, laws and institutions, as far as I deem them to be wrong, unrighteous, or untrue. So as to this tale : this old Abbot Samson is Carlyle's wooden horse ; many a man will let it in ; it is grotesque and pleasant, with a touch of imagination and romance. By and bye the horse begins to open, and there come out some strong-armed men, who play sad havoc amongst the readers. There is use in this, and the man's tale would not have been heard without this masquerading.

There is nothing more remarkable concerning Carlyle, than that, for some years, he completely mystified some people. His "Sartor Resartus," after all one of the most democratic of his works, made its appearance first in *Frazier's Magazine*. He got the people to hear him, because they thought he was half-cracky, as men will admit a half-idiot into their society, like our forefathers with their fools and jesters, who did not always speak folly, but found ample opportunity to rebuke, and to teach truth. So these men put up with Carlyle, little expecting to find the fool's baton will be changed into a two-edged sword, and that with these same bells, which they think he intended to ring for amusement, he intended to ring out a solemn warning peal against a dying and death-like age, a false and hypocritical religion, and against the oppression under which the poor are suffering. This plan certainly has succeeded ; for a dry disquisition upon the matters contained in the book would not have been read, whereas many a man takes it up, expecting to be pleasantly amused, and lays it down again finding he has been unpleasantly instructed. This masquerading I do not object to. Under it, Carlyle manages to convey truth and teach a sublime lesson—that the true mode of

interpreting history, is to suppose that the same principles, passions and affections have animated humanity in all times, lands, and places. Except this belief is in us, we can never read history to advantage. Stringing together catalogues of facts, dates, and chronology, is one of the most empty things with which man can trouble himself: and yet this makes up a large portion of modern education,—that people can run down a list of kings. And when some small child can do this, its wondering mamma holds it forth as a prodigy; it can tell when King Stephen lived; how he lived, and of what disease he died! What has King Stephen's death done for the child? and yet this is what, in modern times, gets itself called education. These dates only become valuable when they are proving something; and these facts are valuable if they prove or illustrate some great law. When we find this monastery and its abbot influenced by the same passions as influence the public to-day, and that licentiousness, squabbles, briberies, and manœuverings went on in that small sphere; then do we understand the key to history, to read it by the light of our own spirit, and to use the interior life of every one of us as a clue through the labyrinth of the past; for when one watches his own life, he watches all life; he has mastered the key of the thing, and is able to decipher all hieroglyphics by being able to decipher the infinite life that goes on within him. Carlyle then proceeds to tell the people some sharp and severe things concerning the state of the country, and warns the aristocracy how there did happen such a thing once as men clothing themselves in breeches made of the skin of the aristocracy: how such things have happened in the olden time, as liberty running mad, and turning into murder and license; and he warns us, in solemn prophetic warning, like a true prophet, of the state of the times we are living in, and, having fully alarmed his reader, he leaves him to struggle towards the root of things.

Now I come to the great grumbling of all critics, that Carlyle does not construct; he is only destructive. Supposing that were true, who said he ought to construct? Who says that one man can do everything? It may be his mission to destroy; it is always ordained that there shall be destructives in the earth. God has always taken care to furnish the world with men whose duty it is to overthrow and raze, even to the foundation. There must come John Knoxes into the world, to knock the crows'

nests about the crows. We may blame the spirit of the man, but if the thing is got by destroying, then it is his misfortune; he is one of the great band of destructives, and must be honoured accordingly. There is no complaint due to Carlyle, on the supposition that his books only indicate what is wrong, and destroy that. He is not called to construct. Then why should he construct for us? Why should this man be called upon to make us a law after he has shewn that we have broken one? We must do it ourselves. This may be the spirit in which Carlyle can be defended; but he may also be justified on other grounds. This cry against him augurs badly. The majority of men are infested with mental laziness. Thinking is not liked by men; as witness the books that they read—just the washiest they can get: just the fault that Paul finds with them when he says, “I expected that by this time ye would have been able to eat strong meat; but ye must still be fed with milk as babes.” This mental laziness is the origin of this cry against Carlyle; men want him to give them some nice, short, patent way of setting all things right. They are fond of a formula, and they grow waspish and pettish with a man who, having knocked some favourite rubbish about their ears, does not build up something in its place. Why, if you take away the house a man is living in, because it is likely to fall upon him, it is not your duty to find him another; let him do that for himself. It is a successful point gained, if Carlyle can make us see how wrong we have been; but we would rather that he should struggle for us. The greatest folly that besets men, is to attempt to do things easily, or to discover railroads to anything. People think they do a young man a great kindness to leave him a large fortune; but it will be found that they understand life most, enjoy it most, and make out its problem best, who struggle for themselves; who have nothing but what they have made for themselves. There be many proverbs in the world on this subject of striving—“Strive and thrive;” “Easily come, easily go;” “What cost nothing is easily gone;” and so on. When there is this restless, feverish wish in men; when the mind, too, savours of this quackable spirit, which distinguishes the people of this country, they are always looking out for this pill, and that nostrum, whereby they may be cured without trouble. Physicians know that men would rather take a dose of physic, however

nauseous, than be limited as to diet, take exercise, sleep hardly, and keep themselves quiet from all undue excitement and feverishness. Why so? Because they are lazy, and it is a much easier thing to swallow the nostrum of a quack than the discipline of nature; to take a pill, and so get rid of the thing, than to alter a course, or renounce a habit. The same in politics; they would rather have a nostrum by a quack, than a regimen by a wise man. So about Carlyle: they grow angry, because he gives them no patent pill, by which all political diseases can be cured at one taking. No; he does well in finding no remedy. Why, if I were to show an individual that he is diseased to-night, and cure him to-morrow, it would make small impression upon him; he must lie many days upon the bed of sickness before he knows what good health means. And then, each one must work his own way towards the light; nothing is so harmful for a man as that which saves him discipline; and for Carlyle to indicate, in some short, off-hand and trite method, a cure for the evil, would be to save us from the discipline of working it out for ourselves. We know it is best that we should knock our house down ourselves; for the chances are that we shall build it up stronger, better, and more wisely, from having been left to do it for ourselves, and at the instigation of the piercing frost and cold east wind. I rather think the man is wise in confining himself to the destructive; for had he been constructive he had but skinned over the wound, instead of leaving it deeply probed, so as to bring it to its final healing. The march of nature is always slow; that of quacks is always quick. Nature does not take this over care of its children; Nature makes no provision that you should not knock your head against this thing, and stumble against that, and fall down and get wounded, because it knows full well that forth from stumbling wisdom comes, that the blueness of the wound is the healing of the man; therefore, in all the true prophets, there is much of the destructive and of stripes. You should therefore thank Carlyle, that, when he points out the evil, he does not give you a cure; for if you faithfully commune with yourselves, you will find that it is because you are so lazy, and because his cure would have saved you from thinking.

But he does indicate one great cure in the "gospel of work." Carlyle at one time seems to take great delight in narrowing man's

sphere; at others he takes delight in enlarging it; he shows us eternity, and he compares it with time; he shows how little the span of our life is, and how much of that little span is made up of disappointment; he brings a man down till he sees how small he is, and then he builds him up again; he shows him the indestructible principle within, and points out the power to create a world of thought out of our own nature; and teaches that all the great things and acts of the world must be done by work. He brings us to be helpless, in order that we may become helpful; he takes delight in shaking about our ears the small philosophy and science, which talks about accounting for things, which, when it has found a learned Greek name for it, imagines that it takes the wonder out of the thing, and that it has satisfactorily explained the phenomena and spirit of the thing. Now, to get rid of this idle conceit, he has first to show you, that you know next to nothing; that with regard to the infinite creation of God, you are a very speck; and with regard to eternity your life is a poor little span. There is no exaltation without a bending; no man can stand thoroughly upright that hath not bowed first; all great things must come of stooping. Carlyle makes you stoop in the dust, and confess "I am little; I am *no* thing; my knowledge is speck-like; I have nought; I can do nought." And then, having reduced us to proper humility, he proceeds to elevate us. He shows you that there is still freedom for you; that you have power to do the work of God, to which He hath appointed you, and he shows you how modern world-erectments are brought about by the incessant work of a small number of men, little noted or little known. There is a beautiful passage in his works, where he takes the things of the present, and shows that they are the results of the labours of other men. He speaks of such towns as this; and shows how many great men must have thought and struggled before a single steam engine, or manufactory, or Macadamised road, or railroad, could have been laid down. He reduces man's duty to this simple thing,—to work continually and incessantly; to take little heed of outward circumstances; to bide his time; to remember that no work is lost, that there is no seed that is true but it produces fruit; and to learn and teach the great gospel, that quackery, imposture, hollowness, shamming and puffery, never did live long in the world. He tells you that nature is so constituted, that if you throw chaff

into the bosom of the earth, you will get nothing but chaff again; but put wheat in,—and the wheat that men put in is faithful and loving word and deed,—do this, in obscurity, quietness, and loneliness, and it shall bring forth an abundant harvest—a harvest wherewith this one Carlyle has blessed it, and other men are also made to bless it. This, I think, will explain to you many things that will appear unpleasant in his writings, as the mockery which at times he puts upon us, and upon our science of political economy. They are all the diligent and careful teaching of humanity. He knows very well that the first lesson is to teach a man that he knows nothing; for of all the helpless people in the world, those are the most helpless who think they know much. It is sometimes our lot to have to teach, and we find that there come two classes to be taught: one says humbly, “We know nothing;” the other gives you to understand that he knows everything. They are like the stiff-necked Hebrews of old; you can tell them nothing but they know it already. Now these, as it occurs to me very often, are the helpless people of the world. Waste no labour on them; you will do little or nothing with them; therefore does Carlyle laugh, sneer, and mock at them, in order that man may be gotten into that comfortable position wherein he says, “I know nothing; I am nothing; I can nothing;” and then, having reduced him to proper humility, he turns the tables to show him that he may also truly say, “I know all things; all things lie open and possible to me, if I will only put myself in communication with the soul, the fact, the great inner power and life of humanity and of good.”

He endeavours to draw attention to those practical duties which it is too much the fashion for us to put upon politicians as a profession, and whose duty it is, therefore, to attend to these matters, and thereby taking license to ourselves to neglect them. But if I understand the spirit of this age, it is fast tending towards breaking down these technicalisms and professions. Men have too long given up theology and politics, and other kindred matters, to men who make it a profession; and, consequently, though those men, by that reason, cultivate it to a greater degree than otherwise they would do, yet these things assume a technical air, and our part in them is resigned and done by proxy, forgetting that, in God's great army of those whose duty it is to fight the

battle of truth against falsehood, there can be no substitutes gotten. If we are drawn for an earthly militia, we may purchase a man to serve in our stead, but in and for the great army of light and truth, there is no substitute to be hired. Each man must do his own work. Now, subscriptions to charitable objects according to the fashion of the day, will by no means absolve us from other duties; but such is modern benevolence. It gives a guinea to get its work done for it; it hires a man to do its duty; and, as we find that compensations in the law of God are hung very truly, we must suppose that those who do the work will get the pay; and if you hire a man to do your duty for you, you must consent to hire him to be rewarded for you. I would suggest that each of you should turn your attention to these sad matters; to this heathendom within Christendom; the gross ignorance of religion in this country; and the fact, as put in the "Chartism" of Carlyle, that there are in this country large numbers of people, who, for thirty weeks out of the fifty-two weeks, get nothing to eat but third-rate potatoes. All these may be tolerable in barbarous lands; but with you, who are piqueing and pluming yourselves on your greatness and your Christian dignity, this is sad in the extreme. Trusting, therefore, that one thing hath been gained for you, that your attention will be directed for the future to these matters, and that you will see how this problem is to be answered, how those who are willing to work may get work, and how all may find a true church and priesthood, a true guidance and governance, we pass on to Carlyle's great historical work, "The French Revolution."

V.

In this book the cavillers about style must drop their cavils; for we are sure that, had Carlyle planned a style to narrate the French revolution in, he had not chosen a better. For this great subject is not to be discussed in nicely-balanced periods, with pretty euphuisms, or verbose magniloquence, nor written on in the style of the Minerva Press or the glazed-paper school; not to be indited on paper perfumed with rose-water, and with pretty blue borders, or any other of the sentimental fripperies of man-milliner authorship. To write of the French Revolution, it would need that the man's style should be revolutionary too; for of true art, it is a principle that the medium should agree with the thing

chosen to be conveyed through that medium. A more revolutionary style than this of Carlyle's in this book, man never did invent. He stalks along the pages, giant-like and colossal; you hear his thundering tread; you see its form disjointed and broken. Not only has he chosen his subject well, but treated of it in a style befitting its own character, like to that of Salvator Rosa among painters; rugged, massy, disjointed, and dark; forming exactly the state of feeling indicated in the book, and bodying forth for us, not only the things themselves, but even the air, the very atmosphere and spirit of the times of which he speaks. The disadvantage of the book is, that it is useless for a man attempting to read it understandingly, unless he is well informed as to the men and events of the French Revolution; for the air with which Carlyle speaks of the facts of the time, is that of a man thoroughly acquainted with them, and supposing his readers to be the same. It is not a nicely cut and dried narrative, after the manner of the histories for children. In no such mode does he narrate this tale; he sets the men living, moving, breathing before you, drawing them vividly and full of life, with relation to the world intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

With regard to the French Revolution itself, it is our fate, down to to-day, to hear much sentimental twaddle talked. It is strange that men fail to read the sublime lesson it reads to us; because, perchance, their eyes are not piercing enough to see through the turmoil, terror, and bloodshed by which it was surrounded and accompanied. Some of our great writers have entered into pitiful jeremiads over the amount of slaughter, and have carefully numbered the heads that fell under the guillotine. These things, doubtless, are sad enough, but legitimists should remember, that in this land of ours, in the reign of Henry VIII., more martyrs fell by violent deaths, than during the whole of the French Revolution. Religion (so-called) has made more martyrs than Democracy throughout its course; and the pitiful discussions between different classes of theologians, have caused more bloodshed in God's fair world than ever did the French Revolution. But it suits the policy of some to sink all the glory it had; to forget all the nobleness it had; to frighten silly people by continually talking only of the discords, and overthrowings, and bloodsheds by which it was marked. But let it be borne in mind, that when bloodshed comes, it is, for the

most part, rather the fault of those against whom it is committed, than of those who commit it. If a thing, in rebounding, rebounds far, it tells a tale of the weight by which it has been pressed down. If when certain weights, fetters, and chains were taken off the French people, they rebounded into license, violence, and bloodshed, it does but indicate to the thinker, how great were the weights, how heavy the fetters, and how galling the chains by which they were bent down. For the French people suffered all these things, under arbitrary, wicked, and unjust laws,—laws of which we have a dim haunting, when it is proposed to repeal a law by which it was forbidden to a seigneur, upon returning from hunting, to kill more than two of his vassals, that he might refresh his weary feet with their warm bowels and blood—one of the feudal laws which taught singular things to the French peasantry, when they got the upper hand. Legal murders, burnings, inquisitions, and *autos-da-fe*, altogether taught the people a singular lesson. When we find the upper classes in society appealing to the torch, in order to get rid of what was disagreeable, those upper classes must not get irritable, if, when the day of the people comes, the torch is applied, not by, but to themselves. This bloodshed soil of the French Revolution tells a tale of what preceded it, and therein teaches a lesson—one that was taught before, with respect to the unfavourable signs of this age—namely, that we are in a transition state, and that these unfavourable symptoms tell, to the wise man rather how bad times past were, than how sad times future are likely to become.

Of course, I am not defending the bloodshed and cruelty of the French Revolution. It was one of those “fiery baptisms,” in which humanity and the world must be at times immersed; it was one of those “purifications,” which never have been done but “by fire;” one of those stern necessities which the sins of the few cause to be treasured up in the hearts of the many, to be visited in heavy retribution upon their own heads. It is high time for us now to drop this sentimentalism; men have wept quite sufficient. Burke played the sentimental long enough; and it is now time for men to have got falcon gaze sufficient to pierce through that haze of bloodshed, and to see beyond it those sublime principles which certainly are grotesquely masked, but of which there is sufficient revealed behind all these confusions, and overturnings,

and discords. What was the Revolution? It was a protest by man that man could not be ultimately governed by a falsity and a sham; it was a standing up to declare that it had been so dealt with, and that it would no longer be so dealt with. It was the protest of man, even the opening of a new apocalypse in France; and, like the other apocalypse, it opened with fire, and sword, and blood. What had the French people to protest against? A church, which had become a club, a trade, and a profit. It had its priests, but no guidance for the people; shepherds, whose duty as they imagined was well to shear the flock, but to trouble themselves little about feeding it; whose problem was to see how much could be got from the flock in a state of starvation; how much wool could be clipped off the half starved sheep. It has been our fate to hear it said by certain people, that more wool can be gotten from half-starved than from well fed sheep; this is a doctrine which is in vogue in agricultural times and countries, and it is one which was carried out to the uttermost by the rulers of the French, who were great hands in shearing the flock, whose wool they thought was thicker and more plentiful by the sheep having been stinted of that food which was down to existence point.

What is a Church? Or rather, what should it be in the world? The guidance of man towards God. It has been said of our church spires, that they are fingers pointing towards heaven; so the church and clerisy should stand between God and man,—not in any priestly fashion, as if we were not all equally near to God,—but to guide and reveal, by the teaching of the more to the less wise; to give that spiritual guidance which the best hearts and the most devout souls are always able, if willing, to give to those who are less blest, less endowed, or who are less at leisure to study and to think. What had this church become in France? A routine worship; almost as good as the suggested worship of Carlyle,—that it had better be made by machinery. Never mind what the spirit of the man, or of the people; he or they could be religious, by merely performing a certain number of duties, all outward and external. It was a mechanical religion, and is well compared by Carlyle to the rotatory calabash of the East, and to the praying machines in use amongst the Kalmucs,—where a small tetotum sort of thing,

being set in motion, performs its rotatory devotions. What is man to do in religion? Why, only to pull the string, or to keep the steam up, by which the praying machine is kept turning and rotating: and then, having performed a proper amount of routine worship, he, having washed his hands of religious duties, may find time to go home to dine, to cheat, to oppress, and to plunder. This material and materialising system, then, had been reduced to a sort of rotatory calabash; the string could be pulled, and a nation's religious duties done. By huge payments, this said machine was kept working; and the showman must be paid well to show it. No pulling of the string till a high reward was given. The poor paid, and yet got nothing; they sought guidance and found none; they asked for bread and got a stone; they entreated food and were fed with a serpent. This church, then, was one huge lie, perpetrated against the people.

Then, with respect to temporal guidance,—or the State, the Government,—the people will always ask, and the world will always need to remember, what it had then become in France. It had become the solution of the problem—“How much tax can be squeezed out of a people, and how little work given them in return?” As Carlyle puts it, even the poor widow's few nettles that she gathers to make nettle broth, were taxed and tithed by the Government, to maintain a Court luxurious, extravagant, and vile, passing expression or even knowledge; to maintain a set of men who, having taken out a license, no one knows where, first to do nothing, and next to cause everyone to help them so to do; who, viewing the people, as the French woman said, as so much common brown crockery ware, and themselves as the finest china and porcelain, made it the duty of the brown ware to minister in everything solely to the safety and good keeping of this said china; which must be used, as china is used by some, not for vulgar Monday use, but only coming forth on Sundays, highdays and holidays. They were, or thought themselves, the very china of society, meant to be set in cabinets, where the common people might gaze their fill at them, and thank God that they had so beautiful a thing to gaze at. This was the French aristocracy—a huge attempt to make the many minister to the few; to show that they, the few, had a divine right to do nothing, to oppress everybody, to shear all the sheep, and to take all the wool to

themselves—in short, to seize the lion's share in everything. This was the second great lie, which humanity could not long bear. It is said in the Eastern proverb, that the last hair it is that breaks the camel's back. The French people had borne all these matters very patiently for a long time; but then at last there came the hair, the camel's back was broken, and the people rose to revolt.

It has been said that one of the great causes of the French Revolution was the writings of certain French infidel philosophers, but there may be too much influence ascribed to these writers. Had their writings been the only hair, the camel's back had not been broken; for five thousand writers, printing five thousand pages a month, could not of themselves bring about a revolution. Men do not get up rebellions to order, and you and your journals may scribble about wars and revolutions as long as you please; except man has an injustice to war against, except there be a lie or sham to be revolted against, there will be brought forth no revolution—no revolt will come, no standard of rebellion will be raised. These writers, then, did not cause this revolution; it was caused by the pressure of what I have shown you. These great lies became absolutely intolerable, and no longer to be borne, for the most patient man or nation has a limit to that patience; pass over it, and he becomes quite impatient; therefore, in his suffering, he begins to act or do; and, acting or doing under impatience, he becomes revolting or rebellious. What did these same philosophers do? They did, in that day, a great and, in some respects, a good work in the earth. It is no use to deny it; their principles, like henbane and prussic acid, have their use, and it were folly to blot them out of the pharmacopœia, and to deny that they have done good, merely because, taken in too great quantity, they will infallibly destroy. What did these men do? They did but substitute one lie for another; no prodigious harm in that, a vigorous protest against such a faith, such a church, and such guidance as France had before the revolution was no prodigious harm. Lord Bacon says, what some of you may not be inclined to believe, that "atheism is better than gross superstition." That is a subject well worth discussion. Which is the better? Bacon, than whom few more clear-sighted men have existed, has pronounced in favour of atheism, which leaves the mind somewhat

fallow ; whereas, superstition so overcomes the man that he not only has possessed his mind with certain things, but he hath enervated that mind ; superstition hath not only taken possession of it, but made a slave of it. Another of his reasons for preferring atheism to gross superstition is, that atheism has been usually tolerant. Now Bacon had not seen the French Revolution, and I am not a believer of the excessive toleration of Atheism. We have seen men get up tolerably good hot persecutions in favour of no-belief, of those having no religion ; and the French Revolution could persecute the Catholic priest because he was a priest. Many of these French Revolution men understood little better than most Englishmen the absolute rights of conscience—the right of every man to believe what he can, or to believe nothing if he cannot. If a man be an atheist, we have nothing to do with that. If he does not violate any of the laws of our society, he hath a right to believe or not, according to his own judgment. And they who would punish any man for no-belief, are as bad in principle and spirit as those who would have punished men for false belief. Still, in the general principle, Lord Bacon, I think, will be proved to be right, that it is better to have an atheistical state of society, than to have one of gross superstition ; because, if Carlyle be interpreter, an atheistic state of society is more like the centre of indifference ; the resting time in the man's mind, where the night turns into twilight, previous to the rising of the day. Some of you may recollect, in one of the works of Frederika Bremer, a description of watching the sun in northern regions,—that having gone down, he stops as it were on the balance, and halts awhile, and then proceeds to rise again. That is just the case in the soul. The sun of belief goes down ; halts for a time in the thickest cloud-land of no-movement ; balances for a time, neither believing nor disbelieving ; but, having hung thus a short time, that sun of belief proceeds to rise up the eastern steps, bringing with it wisdom, and gladness, and peace. Scepticism, doubt, or infidelity, may be the balancing of the sun, previous to its rising. This was the case with the French nation. Governed by a lie, they protested against it, got well rid of it, flung it off, hung for half a century in indifference, in no-belief, in nothing, the absence of faith. But see, what is France now ? There is coming over France a faith and a deep belief. The

greatest men in France, at this time, are amongst its most earnest believers ; and those who govern its destinies, political and religious, are becoming earnest and sincere believers, in no technical, but in the deep, spiritual sense of the word. These French infidel *philosophes*, whose writings preceded the Revolution, did their work in destroying. No new temple could be well built till the old rubbish was got well away. A man must get the ground thoroughly cleared, before he begins a new building. And when things have grown so exceedingly mischievous as to need removing, you must consent to have a set of destructives at work. Such were the French philosophers, Voltaire and Rousseau and others, pulling down a huge fabric of no-truth, of sham ; a fabric that pretended to be a house fit for an immortal soul to live in, but which was, in reality, a huge ungainly thing, built up to house a few at the expense of the many. In endeavouring to understand what these men's mission and work were, I am not pronouncing upon them absolutely ; but I think the day for that rosewater philosophy, as Carlyle would put it, which can never see any good thing in any men that are not all good,— which must have all to be the regular pinks and patterns of beauty before they can be anything,—which reduces all things either to the angelic or the demoniac, and if men cannot make out a right to the title “ angel ” they must belong to the demoniac ;—that kind of philosophy is passing from us, and we are beginning to see that mankind are very mixed, like the fabled mermaids, and it does not follow that though the tail may be fish-like, the head and upper part of the body may not have the Divine image written thereupon. These men had a measure of truth in them. They were called upon to protest against huge and hideous falsities and lies : and here came in their misfortune. Trained from their childhood to look upon this church as *the* church, the unique, the only,—to believe this church and religion to be identical,—when called to remove that, in removing it they removed their all.

Such is the true philosophic explanation of the infidelity of many a great head and heart that have been amongst us ; such seems to be the solution of the infidelity of such a man as Shelley. He had looked so long upon the blood-stained page of ecclesiastical history, had read the many legends of the martyrs, and had seen the holy cross of the Lord made the rallying sign for bloodshed

and slaughter; he had watched the oppressor's foot upon the human neck, and the heavy chains laid upon mankind under the pretence of spiritual freedom;—and, having looked at that too exclusively, he fell into the deeper error of mistaking an abuse for the use, of looking upon an abomination as the virtue, instead of regarding it as a foul excrescence which had grown upon the beautiful, holy faith which it pretended to be, but which it was not. I believe a very large part of the infidelity with which society has been troubled, might be put down, if we were candid and fair, to the account of those who are believers. If we make religion false to men, their nature calls upon them to protest against its falsity. If we teach, as it is the fashion to teach, that our version is the absolute, true, sole, and only version, and that if a man cannot accept that, he can accept nothing,—he accepts nothing. French priests stood up saying, “We are the veritable, true, and only church; we are religious,” and the man said, “I believe you not; thou art a huge lie and imposture; I must protest.” He protested, and removed it, and, by their own logic, there was no religion left. It might be said, “If my sect, faith, or belief be the only specimen of the Christian verity, and you cannot, and will not believe it, who then taught you, except myself, that in overthrowing my version of the matter, you cut yourselves off entirely?” The French church had taught such men as Voltaire and Rousseau that it was the only thing called Christianity, and that in protesting against that they cut themselves off from the true faith; overthrow that, and they were, by the logic of the church, necessarily reduced to an abnormal state of no-belief, uncertainty, atheism, and infidelity.

But were the men sinless in so doing? By no means. They were diseased, and followed a common disease, which a little looking to our own lives would teach us that we have the key of. It is strange how men prefer borrowing water out of a neighbour's pitcher, to going to the fountain for it. So many men will not believe Christianity, because some men pretend to be Christians and are not Christian-like. This, of all the fooleries that would-be wise men ever committed, is about the most absurd. Why should we see Christianity through our neighbour's glass? What excuse is it to us that one man pretends to do right, and does it not? It does not remove our obligation to go where he has professed to have gone, and get for ourselves the living water. It is

nothing but sloth that makes us prefer to stand at the house door, and, seeing some neighbour go by with a pitcher of what he says is living water, makes us prefer asking him to give us that water instead of going to the living, perennial fountain whence he should have drawn, from which he pretended to have drawn, but whence he did not draw. I pronounce these men, in accepting Christianity and religion from their neighbours rather than from the Book; in going back to their fathers rather than the founders; in looking at developments rather than at the thing—to have committed an unmanly thing; for it is being beggar to our neighbours; it is setting a man between us and God in the things of the spirit; it is as sensible as to refuse to look at the sunshine, but only to ask that it may be reflected upon us from our neighbours' faces, or from some pocket mirror. There is nothing commoner than for men to neglect religion because of the hypocrisy of the religious; but just review the matter, and you will find that, instead of its being a manly thing, it is about the most childish thing a man with an intellect of his own can possibly commit. Of all things with which I have little patience, and can hardly speak tamely, this is *the* one. We are absolutely pestered with unbelievers, and men who do not believe because they think it is an unmanly thing so to do. I would commend to your attention the anecdote of Coleridge, who, when a boy at the Blue-coat School, took it into his head that he would become an unbeliever. Some one went and told Mr Bower, the master, who came to Coleridge: "You are an infidel, young man, are you?" said the master. "Yes, sir," said Coleridge; and the master proceeded to give him a good caning, which Coleridge says was the only "righteous flogging" he ever got. I may not recommend the flogging of heretics, but I would advocate the application of the lash of *ridicule* to certain phases and forms of infidelity; to that sort of infidelity which thinks it is the mark of a high mind not to believe. Bulwer says that infidelity, instead of being the mark of a high, noble, and generous spirit, is the mark of a mean, low, and base mind; and yet many young men think it a manly thing not to believe, not to be "done," not to be "taken in,"—just that mean, narrow, niggardly spirit that is to be found hung up for everlasting admiration in Rochefoucauld's maxims, or Benjamin Franklin's advices, which teach a man always to be looking out for fear he

should be taken in. Another great man has said, he would never call that man his friend who could boast that he had never been taken in. So, if any man comes to me, and says he has never been taken in in all his life, he is not the man for me. Such are those cold natures that are always calculating, and will look at a man a hundred times before they shake his hand once, and are always trying to find out some design against themselves. They follow Rochefoucauld's maxim,—“Every man to be taken for a knave until he is proved honest,” instead of following out Christ's maxim, which, though not written in so many words, he has expressed in so many deeds,—“Count every man honest till he is proved knavish; treat a man as divine until you prove that he is demoniac.” So much, then, for that trashy infidelity which comes, not of a stern struggle to believe and finds itself unable, but of a small, blind, infatuated vanity, which perhaps has not the ability to go through the study necessary to lead to a good unbeliever; for to make a proper unbeliever it requires a great deal more study than these small witlings ever had the manhood or sense to undertake. I blame these men, then, that they should have preferred to learn the version of a thing from its abuse and not from its use. Herein they should be judged, though not by me; man is answerable for his belief to God; every man has the evidence before him.

These French *philosophes* undoubtedly did much. They removed the old landmarks, they levelled the old guidance and government, they pointed out to the people the hugeness and hideousness of the lies by which they were governed, and so prepared them for revolt; and the men, in so much of their deed, did not wrongly or unwisely. The sadness was, that in taking away the lie they did not give the truth—were unable to give it—they had only that partial vision which fixed upon the diseased part, and had no ministration or mission to see the beautiful; and when taking away the hollow staff, upon which a man might have been leaning to his danger, they could not give him that staff by which he could pass through the dark valley of this life, and by which he could be safely guided into the land which is to come. This said French Revolution was remarkable for the men it produced—stern, Titanic sort of men, like a breed of the old giants come back again—men who exhibited to the student some

of the most peculiar phases under which humanity ever appeared. It has been remarked in "Zanoni" that most of the great butchers of the Revolution were noticed for their love of some particular animal. Their lives are worth studying, and they cannot be more graphically put than in this great book of Carlyle's. We see these men stalking through their times; men who divest themselves of all weakness—whom terror cannot move, or blood oppose.

It is perfectly hopeless for me to run through the great cycle of the French Revolution, its great facts and deeds, and the earnest protest it uttered. Mistake it not as a thing of the past. Men talk about it as a thing that has been laid upon the shelf in the great museum of history as a dead effete thing. But the French Revolution has yet to be completed. We are a product of it, in much that we say, think, or do. These strange things, done in Paris, were but the partial opening of an Apocalypse; the seals are yet opening, and the roll is yet being unrolled, and many peaceful things done in this country are genuine products of that same great movement, which, beginning in blood, shall end in peace and glory; which, beginning in fire, shall end in purification thrice blessed, thrice holy. It must not be regarded as a thing of the past, or it cannot be understood. It was a turning-point of humanity. Things had been getting blacker and blacker down till then. Then men halted for a time, busied themselves in getting rid of the no-truth by which they had been governed.

And what are *we* doing? Building up and constructing what they left clear space for us to do. See the great change that is coming over Europe, see this country returning to faith and spiritualism. We are becoming again childlike in confessing that we have not got the foot-rule yet that can measure Infinity; that we have not discovered the scale that can weigh the human soul; that no callipers have been invented that can measure the mind; that we have not succeeded in bottling a spirit, or in reducing all eternity to some old wives' fable; that we are about to turn the tables upon these philosophers, and to become, as some of them would sneeringly say, superstitious again. See the faith of France coming back, the struggling between the Jesuits and the University men; not particularly Protestantism flourishing, or Romanism declining, but earnestness coming back. See what Victor Cousin

and his compeers are doing: overthrowing that sensual philosophy which was the bane of France, which reduced goodness to a formula, and which has little faith in anything that it cannot measure, smell, weigh, touch, and balance. They are returning to a deeper faith and a more earnest spiritualism. This changed spirit of the age is an efflux of the French Revolution—a building upon the waste places it made—for *we* suffered well-nigh as much change by the French Revolution, in things political and social, as did the French. It did its work in this country; it did one noble work for us all: instead of a set of subservient slaves, it has made us a set of rational thinkers; it has made us to call established verities continually in question; it has produced that inquiring spirit of to-day that will not be imposed upon, that takes hold of all grey beards to see whether they are beards or but a sham osageness; and which, by that venerable beard, dashes the empty head against the wall, and proclaims, “Thou, with thy masked face, art no thing to govern me; I will not have thee, except thou canst make thy patent good by likeness to God, by likeness to truth, and verity indwelling there.” This is one of the best signs of our times. No matter how grey a thing be, how long its beard, or how venerable its appearance, it must come into court and get questioned. This is the age of reviewing; of taking down our great men and our old beliefs and trying them, and seeing how much of them belongs to God, how much to man, and how much to the devil; trying all political faiths, and seeing whether they be true to the rights of men, to the old eternal laws; and if not, consigning them to the great Tophet, where all lies must, sooner or later, get themselves buried or consumed. This is a natural product of the French Revolution, which was a huge protest of this kind, a taking into their own hands the right to try. The French Revolution was the calling of a great jury of humanity, to try kings and priests, rulers and princes, poets, philosophers, and scribes; come into court they all must, and be tried by the old eternal laws: and if found wanting, be conducted out of court, there to meet the fate they so well deserve. Nor should this French Revolution be a matter of arbitrariness, whether it is studied or not. There are many questions which, if we are true men, we shall ask. One man will ask, “What is work?” that is, what is the end of life? He will

ask, "Who is the task-master?" that is, who, and what is God? He will ask how he is to work; that is, the method and mode of life; and if he be wise, he will ask where he is to work, where is the field he is to till, what soil is it, what does it demand of him? Not only must a man know the work he has to do, but how he must do it, and *where* he is to do it; the age in which he lives, the great field in which he is called to work; he must understand its spirit, necessities, and requirements,—except he would do what many of his fellows have done and are doing,—resist the march of humanity, forgetting that if they do resist it, they will, like the pilgrims to Juggernaut, lay themselves down to be crushed by its huge wheels. "It is hard for thee, Paul, to kick against the pricks." "Why," saith God, "do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Such is the lesson given as to these poor human labourers who would oppose the design of God in the progress of man; which is about as effective as if you should lay down your finger beneath the heavy, broad wheel of a waggon, and thereby expect to stay its course. Sad thing is it to see a man waste his labour; working to-day with strong arm at something which must go to-morrow. Such seems to me like the child's writing upon the sand; destined to be obliterated, obliterated, in a short time and for ever. All labour, then, that is not in accordance with the onward march of man; that is not a furtherance of man, a progress; that is not in accordance with the spirit of our time, is waste labour, lost labour, mere obstructiveness; *made* useful, though not intended so. Friction is very necessary; but I would rather be the revolving wheel than the obstructing surface. One does not particularly envy the stone on the road that makes the carriage halt. One would rather be one of the wheels spoken of by Ezekiel, which had the spirit of the living creature in them. If these views are true, we must understand the French Revolution, or we shall know not what we are working. It is the key to open the age; the sound of the trumpet at the opening of the seal, the unrolling of the scroll. The French Revolution is the gaunt, grotesque preface to the age in which we are living.

With respect to the book, however, it is a strange, wild, graphic, and grotesque performance; its style is Carlylish in the extreme,—the full bloom of peculiarity, the eccentricity of

eccentricities ; but the style is such as no very wise man would wish to see changed, in this work at least. He proceeds to make the history live before us ; not by a due, set, and well-connected narrative, but by flashes, revelations, and glimpses ; and to understand it thoroughly, you must become well read in the pamphlets, tracts, and narratives of the times. Still, let none despair ; much may be made out by diligence and care ; and for those who love knowledge there is hope. Philosophising upon the French Revolution, he deals little in it—he is not of that school of historians. There are those who reduce all history to a connected set of bare narratives : and there are your philosophical historians, who not only tell you the history itself, but also kindly tell you what to think about it. Then there is the dramatic form of history, in which the man is given, and not the mere tale ; but he is exhibited before you in his deeds, words, and thoughts, and you are left to do the philosophy yourself. To this latter class Carlyle belongs ; and in reading his history, you must put in the philosophy yourselves, or go without it. It is not one of those works which carry the philosophy along with them ; where there comes a halt, and then a line of capitals, to tell you that the moral is here. In many men's works, you have a fact or event ; then comes a solemn pause, and large capitals to proclaim, " Now the moral is about to commence." What is the consequence ? Why, as in our school-days, we diligently read the fable, and very diligently omit to read the moral. Children's books are constructed on this principle. A bit of morality is put in between the more entertaining parts of the story ; in this, very much resembling certain sandwiches, in which, between two thick pieces of bread and butter, you have a very ghost-like slice of ham. I have watched venerable fathers and ancient maternals reading these children's books ; and I notice that *they* also quite as diligently omit to read the moral. Children have a very wonderful talent for this ; by a sort of divination, they can see at a glance which is tale and which moral. The philosophy ought so to lie in the history or the tale, that the tale, as told, must involve and contain the philosophy. Thus, in the tale of Carlyle, the moral and the philosophy lie bound up in, and inseparable from, the story ; the esoteric is skilfully inwoven with the exoteric ; and if this be above your comprehension, why, content yourselves to go

your way rejoicing, blessing yourselves that you do not feel the high vocation to enter into the meaning and significance of any such mystical and strange language.

VI.

We will now pass on to the last of Carlyle's works—his "Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell." Concerning this book, some disappointment seems to have been experienced. People say that it does not give so much of Carlyle's opinions as they expected. No, it gives us something better than those; it gives us the text and opinions of his hero. Seldom, in the literary world, have I known a more modest thing than that book. Here is a man who, if he had blessed us with three volumes of his own, equally large, would have been sure to have had them read; but he prefers to give us Cromwell as he is. This is modesty; and it is fair play. Carlyle will not set himself up to dictate as to Cromwell; but he supplies you with the man's letters and speeches, and his version and explanation of them, with this fair intention,—that if you do not like his explanations, there are the letters, explain them for yourselves. Quite eclectic and catholic; "Here I give you my version; if you do not like it, take the text and form your own version." So that I admire the book for this very thing, for which some people have found fault with it. Besides, it is hardly respectful to such a man as Cromwell to leave him wholly to any man's interpretation, for no man's version of Cromwell can be Cromwell himself; Cromwell cannot be improved; there can be no improved edition of a man. We may have expurgated, purified, revised, improved editions of a *book*; but nothing can be left out of a *man*; there can be no expurgation, there can be no flinching from the truth. True, many biographers represent their subjects as the most kind and affectionate of men,—very pinks of propriety, very patterns and exemplars,—the lights of the world, the true salt of the earth. These biographies are written tombstone fashion; we turn them over, and are perfectly astonished to see how very beautiful a thing human nature is. We had no idea before that there were so many great men in the world; men or monsters, having no faults. Then, again, lying is always met by compensation. When I read tombstones, I read them with circumspection and allowance; and biographies of this kind I believe just as little of; and so with any

improved version of a man, if you do not give me the man, I cannot believe it at all. True biographies or epitaphs are those which give us both sides of the man.

It has been said, that in this book Carlyle has not given us both sides of Cromwell. Perchance he thought that his black side had been done very well for some centuries past, and that there was no need to have any more of it. All the history-painters have painted him so black, that it is now time to throw in some strong lights upon the picture. I do not know that such was Carlyle's idea; but if it was, it appears very excusable. "You have all been blackening Cromwell, I must 'pick in the lights,' as the painters say; because you have reduced it to supernatural darkness, and nobody could make anything of it, if I did not cast some exceedingly strong lights upon it." With regard to this man, Cromwell, there is not a more notable case of the world suffering itself to be taken in. He died; Charles the Second came back; and there succeeded a licentious, abominable, shallow, fripperied, and knavish age. Of course, they felt themselves dwarfed by being near such a man as Cromwell, for manikins do not like to stand near a giant; it makes them look smaller than ever. These essenced Rochesters and Buckinghams could not bear the huge shadow he cast, which made these small people look absolutely like children; for there stood the man, rock-like, and they were so near the base, overwhelmed by his shadow, that they felt a dull, chill, icy coldness;—and it was, therefore, well for them to pronounce this thing to be itself a mere shadow, and themselves the true light. If you can prove elsewhere a gigantic wrong or wickedness, your own dwarfed falsehood becomes trueness, the more unlike you are to that gigantic evil. These petty, puny creatures thought if they could only manage to turn the lie upon Cromwell—to make out that he was a wretch, a liar, an impostor, and full of wickedness—then would they, by being very unlike him, be taken to be true, sincere, righteous, good, earnest men. This will be found the philosophy of a great deal of the blackening done in the world. "I am this, and he is quite other than I. If I can prove that he is wrong, that he does evil, then am I, by being and doing the contrary, just what I should be." And, as the majority of men consent, goose-like, to run over the great common of life, following their leader for the time, so of course

do the bulk of men follow after those who first blackened Cromwell. Consequently, as Cromwell's bones were dug up to be gibbeted, his character was raked up, to have the same thing done to it by men who were of a "flunkey" or "lackey" age, as Carlyle calls it, in which they took "*Jeames's*"* views of the matter; in which they could see nothing honourable that was without epaulettes; no manliness without gold lace upon his coat; nothing very dignified that did not wear powder and pay tax in consequence; no worth, except it was stamped by court favour, no patent of nobility, except it was enrolled in the Herald's College. Thus the lackey ages followed that of Charles II., and blackened this giant, Cromwell, to make themselves look brighter and larger men; to turn their semi-shade into the resemblance of light—on the same principle that the ladies of old times put small-patches upon the face in order to heighten the delicacy and fairness of the skin,—thinking that if Cromwell could be made the patch, verily they would come forth in beauty not otherwise their own. Hence they laid the dark shades thick upon him, endeavouring to reduce the man to a liar, a cheat, and a knave. Long ago, one of our great authors said that the day would come for the resurrection of reputation from the tomb of false opinion, when the greatest men of the past should rise to receive their reward for past obloquy; when of some it must be said, "He hath had worship not enough; here for the future shall be our Walhalla for him; to him, for the future, pay homage and reverence." Notably now, for Cromwell, are we turning the tables, and getting quite another version of him than the old one so long current. Before, he was pronounced to be the summing up of all hypocrisies, the greatest liar of the world; but now Carlyle has put to us a very remarkable thing,—that there is no proved lie against Cromwell anywhere in history.

One or two things I may now mention which have not been noted with respect to this man, and I will explain one or two matters which I think have not received the full light that should be thrown upon them. Much is made of Cromwell's peculiar religious dialect; and it is said that because he talked in this

* "*Jeames's Diary*," appearing in *Punch* at the time when Carlyle was writing his "*Cromwell*," gave a "flunkey's" views of life, and men "in high places."

singular, puritanic, piebald dialect at one time, and not at another, that therefore he put it on when he thought it needed; that when he was surrounded by preachers, he talked Puritanese, but when soldiers came, and fighting was to be done, he used good sharp short Saxon words; consequently (as it is alleged) the man's religion was an imposture—a lie. Those who say so understand modern life but little, for I would undertake to find a true, pious, sincere, earnest, humble, religious heart, who believes earnestly in God and walks by the light of the invisible world, but yet to hear him talk about religion it would make anyone smile. Here a scrap of Hebrew, there a bit of Greek; here a bit of good Saxon English, there a piece of chapel dialect; here a peculiar phrase, learned out of a creed book, and there a scrap conned out of the Common Prayer. Now, meet the same man in his shop, and he will talk to you in good modern English. Is he then a hypocrite? No. He has been bred to talk of religion in a proper dialect, and, to my mind, it is as natural as when a sailor comes before you and talks of nautical matters in nautical phrases. It would be a great shame to judge these men false because they do not talk plain English like other people. The mistake is not in the use of a dialect, but in what lies behind its use; that is, in technicalising religion, in getting people to think that religion is a parallel line with life, instead of being the soul and spirit of life. Too many of us look at religion in the wrong light, as if it was a something standing separate,—here religion, there science, trade, art. That is not the true view of a man's life. A true man's life is like a series of circles round one common centre; religion the grand centre, and the others like radii going forth from this great centre; for there are no parallel lines, but effluxes flowing ever forth from this great and true centre, of the belief in God, immortality, and Christ in the heart. If you reduce religion to this parallel line or technicalism, you make it to be regarded as a thing to be put on and put off again, to be lavendered and laid up in drawers till the next high feast day when it comes out to be worn again. Then will it necessarily get itself a dialect of its own; then will religious people talk their own peculiar chapel dialect, whether Puritans, Churchmen, Wesleyans, Quakers, or others. These people are not necessarily less earnest and sincere because they are thus led to speak

a particular dialect. I would myself venture to talk to a churchman for a quarter of an hour in a dialect unintelligible to him, which he would not be able at all to understand. Why so? Because such churchman has not been bred in a chapel or conventicle. I could so explain the Roman Catholic faith to a Protestant, that he would not be able to understand it, and would know nothing of it; whereas to a Catholic the whole would be intelligible, because it would be in his own proper technical dialect. Try Cromwell by this test. His first notions of religion were gotten from the Puritans. He associated with them and their preachers, nay, he exhorted too; he read their books, and mixed with them till he got in consequence the Puritan's dialect, which came to him naturally when he talked about religion, and he spoke in the tongue in which he had always heard it spoken of; but when he talked about life and business, he talked of it in the tongue in which others talked, and in which all religious denominations would understand it. So we may go at any time now into the society of an honest, upright, and godly man, whose religious dialect we shall not be able to understand, and whose business dialect we can perfectly comprehend, and who, if he speaks a particular religious dialect, it is because he knows no other. This charge against Cromwell goes rather to prove him sincere than insincere.

Then it has been said that he sometimes jested with respect to sacred matters, and two tales of this are told, which are apocryphal, and of which there is no proof. But suppose them proved, and what does it amount to? It is open to my own experience to have sat down at a good clerical association, and now and then those men have absolutely laughed, and in a quiet, joking sort of spirit they have spoken of a thing which should not be held lightly. Were the men very blameable? No. It is one of the eccentricities of the soul; jesting sometimes comes to relieve an over-burdened heart, and there have been such things as a man laughing when wailing might have been expected. Some of you may have experienced a strong desire to laugh when you ought to have looked solemn; in fact, it is a fatality with some that when they ought to be the very pinks of propriety, sobriety, and seriousness, they are looking as waggish and droll as can be. And how much of this may not have been the case with Cromwell

in the foundation (if there were any) for these two tales! It is said that he was improperly jesting and joking when about to sign a death-warrant, and smearing the pen across Harry Martin's face; also that he got rid of some people on one occasion by flinging a bolster at the head of one, and helping the other downstairs by a kick or a push. I am willing to admit both these things to be true, and the man who speaks harshly against Cromwell for them is a shallow man who understands little of our nature. Have you not watched life long enough, and often enough, to know that there is such a thing as nervousness and over-wrought excitement striving to find vent? Why, Louis Philippe sits in his chair when transacting business with his ministers, and draws cartoons. Bonaparte whittled away at the arm of his chair. Was the man a child, a fool, or a dreamer, because his knife was working away at the chair? I have seen books of Melancthon, in which there are fac-simile sketches of curious heads,—grotesque masks on the margin of sundry pages in the books, out of which Melancthon lectured to his students; and to get rid of his nervousness, the man used to draw comical faces on the margin of the page. Was the man a fool because he did that? Did he lecture the less wisely, or less earnestly, for doing these things? Even the humpkin stands twiddling and twirling a key or a bit of string, because he comes into your presence and is weighed down by awe at the sight of your honourable or venerable self. No; the man was over-wrought, over-excited; it was because he felt so deeply that he did it, and not because he felt so little; it was the strong attempt of an over-burdened mind to relieve itself. As for that unceremonious breaking up of the Council, who that hath been condemned to sit upon a committee and to hear endless men betwaddle one almost to death; giving you their "forsooth," "peradventure," "notwithstanding," and "in consequence of," and "he would if he could,"—who that hath borne this, that would not almost wish for Cromwell to be sending some good sofa bolster at their heads, and so clearing the atmosphere by one strong electric stroke. It strikes me that Cromwell chose no bad way of getting rid of the business, especially when we happen to know that he did not want to give his opinion; when he had heard other people, and held his peace; which, as we know, is sometimes necessary in our

day. After hearing all he could, he discharged them in that curious fashion, making one of them go down-stairs faster than he ascended. Does not that look more like the thing, than the sham and dupery which has been built upon this shallow foundation? No; these are evidences of truth, just as I know sundry epistles in the New Testament to be genuine, not so much from the prolegomena of these learned men; but I know them to be the genuine letters of living men, because there slips in at the end of one, for instance, such directions as this,—“The cloak which I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.” Paul, a busy man, had perhaps forgotten these things, and wrote for them. No man getting up a thing for imposture would have thought of that. They would have been too clever, like one of the men pursuing a thief who suddenly disappears, and most of them are for going to search the house. “Oh, no,” says the clever man of the party, “he is sure not to go into that house, because he will think that we shall naturally seek for him there.” So they go forward, and the over-sage or over-cunning man leaves the thief safely ensconced in the house. If men were getting up these things for impostures, they would not have thought of these little matters; they would have seemed too minute for them, to write about some parchments which a man had forgotten. But it is precisely these little Dutch touches in the picture, that show us the genuineness of the letter, and the character of the man. These things, in Cromwell’s case, show us the earnest heart, the struggle of nature within him; he was too man-like to pretend to be the pink of perfection; he did not belong to that school which thinks it necessary to reduce everything to an angelic formula. There is something so far off about these perfect sort of people; we look at them from a distance, admire them, and so have done with them. And so with Cromwell: if he had never done any but great deeds we might have admired him, but it would have been at a very great distance; we could not have come near him. Beware of isolating any great man from you. Keep him nigh to you. Meditate on those parts of his nature which show that he is bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. Take the old Greek and Latin men; look at them in their loftiness and in their weakness; for it is only through the little weaknesses of his

nature, that I know a great man to be a brother,—because he hungers when I hunger, weeps when I weep, rejoices when I rejoice, hath his clothing upon him as I have, and hath, like me, his failures and his successes, his struggles and hopes, his doubts and fears.

With respect to what Carlyle has said of Cromwell, it reduces itself to the formula before given, that no sham man ever did such good work as he has done in the world. He says: “By his fruits ye shall know him”; and those fruits being in the main good and true, the man cannot be bad.

And now, having great love for this Cromwell, I will, before quitting him, mention one or two other points connected with him. Some people pronounce him to be a barbarian, and say he had no taste for art or literature. This is an eminent lie. We are told he took great pains to prevent a certain learned library from going out of the country. We find him pensioning literary men, and setting apart a sum of money to have good maps of Ireland laid down; appointing professors to one university, and purchasing certain rolls of curious MSS. for the other. Very barbarian deeds are these; so barbarian that many a modern Government might do well to imitate them. Cromwell was one of the master spirits that taught catholicity and the rights of conscience. He has been sadly wronged and maligned here. He was a man far in advance of almost any of us. Amongst his chaplains there were Independents and Presbyterians; he had not got to the modern system, which is to hear no preachers but the men who are continually chanting our own belief, and picturing our own minds—a species of mental vanity—just as men surround their chambers with mirrors, that they may see themselves every time they move. It is so pleasant to turn round and see every man holding one’s own opinions; to see every man a reflex of one’s self. I dissent from that; I think it is a tame, stale, unprofitable sort of thing. I look round this room and see no two faces cut alike, and it appears to me that if all the faces were made of one pattern, the room would look a trifle less interesting than it does. This Cromwell had a chaplain, who bestowed a very inflicting lecture on him for some opinion he held. Cromwell suffered him to preach his belief, and still held his own. We find him showing kindness to many Roman Catholics; and, though called by the

law to put down and punish them, we often find him in private assuaging the rigour of the law. An eminent Roman Catholic, Kenelm Digby, received money and other kindnesses from Cromwell, to enable him to prosecute his studies. He bestowed great kindness upon the Episcopalians, giving them many advantages; he was the friend of the Quaker, upholding his right to worship God in his own fashion; and he protested against the persecution bestowed upon the first English Unitarians. When it was said that men ought to be persecuted and hunted, Cromwell said he could not support that. He was the friend of the Jew, maintaining for him a right to worship the God of the Hebrews; that he should do it as long as he believed in the old Scriptures and the uncome Messiah. This is the barbarian Cromwell, whom we have abused so long in histories. He taught liberty of conscience further than most men have learned it yet; he taught it to the proper extreme which shall yet come, when no man shall dare to call his brother to account for his religious opinions. Every man stands next and nigh to God; and God never asks us to assist him in judging the world. All men persecuting for belief, constitute themselves, for the time, God's assessors; undertake to assist him. As if he wanted aid! Who asks you to do that part of the world's business? I would say, "Every time you feel inclined to annoy, or hurt, or persecute a man because he believes not with you, think you are committing the hugest impudence against God, taking His work upon you. You are not called upon to do it; it is no part of your duty; see that you leave it thoroughly undone." There was something Titanic and gigantic about the old modes of persecution; roasting a man right out of the world looks as if we did believe he deserved it. By the modern way of doing it there is nothing gigantic. But the spirit of persecution may not be altered, though its form is so; lions and fleas can both trouble us. It is not needful that a thing should be gigantic to become annoying. This is modern persecution; taking away a man's character, by insinuation, innuendo, and hint. Be clear of all of it, the unmanliest thing that can ever be done.

I must now pass away from this man Cromwell, commending this large book to your study, and hoping that after studying it thoroughly, you will come to a truer version of his character. I have explained the possible charitable theory to those who feel

inclined to think Carlyle has overrated Cromwell. He has not catalogued his faults; you will all be able to put in the black shade yourselves. Many take pleasure in putting in the faults in a man's character; they think it shows their discriminating knowledge of character and of the world. Take Carlyle's Cromwell, then, and work away with it. Put in as many faults as you like, to show your knowledge of the world, strength of intellect, and non-dupeability. Certainly, the book will to some appear one-sided: that is because Carlyle does not belong to that school of critics who think because they put a good thing on one side they are obliged to put a bad thing on the other, and for every adjective on the one side of the page they must have one on the other; as,—if a man be pronounced kind, you must have a “but” in the middle—“He was kind, *but* somewhat severe;” “He was wise, *but then* he was hasty tempered;” “He was a great man, *but* he had his failings.” This is thought to be the perfection of impartiality and fairness. Carlyle does not follow that system. He does not object to the good of a man's character filling up the page of the folio, and that there are but two or three entries on the bad side. Some people like an even number of entries on the debtor and creditor side of the book. Carlyle does not object to the unseemly want of harmony in having this page filled and that empty. He has filled up one page, and perhaps not quite filled up the other; he has left us something to do. There is a pleasure in picking holes in a man's coat, and he having given Cromwell a new superfine coat, we can exercise ourselves in finding out the faults, and putting in the shadows for ourselves.

I am sometimes asked if Carlyle's books are religious, but I find difficulty in answering that question. If I knew what people call religious, I could then tell whether the books are so or not. There is a lack of a recognition of some of the high doctrines of Christianity in them; there is a hazy and somewhat mystical air of religionism over them, perhaps not quite what we would have. He is unwilling to supply us too much,—to give a cut and dried formula to save us from thinking. If it be supposed that for a man to be religious, he must have a continual working up of forms and doctrines, feeling, barometric and thermometric observations of the weather of the soul, a constant diary-keeping—you will find little of that sort of religion in Carlyle's books. He

understands that a man's interior life is made hidden by God ; he understands that the soul's life only retains its beauty when it is the life in the soul. He has taught, that when the inner life of man is dragged forth for everyone to look at, for everybody to finger and handle it, its beauty is spoiled, its purity is soiled, and hypocrisy is engendered. If a man has to exhibit, at a given time, his inner life, the root of the thing, he runs the risk of getting it up to order. If such books only are religious, then are Carlyle's very irreligious books. If a man is religious by a constant talking about the matter, then also are they irreligious. But oftentimes the most talked-of things are the least valuable things. It is true, "Out of the fulness of the heart the tongue speaketh," but there are thoughts and feelings which lie too deep for tears, and if they cannot be expressed in that language, they cannot be expressed in tongue language. I will read on this subject a passage from one of the great Germans, a piece of good manly satire :—

"We all know that the more a man prates about his feelings the less he has of them, and that a sensation, the expression of which he sees printed before him, is on that very account so much the seldomer felt within the breast ; we have therefore always maintained, and shall always maintain, that the twaddle about feelings which we find in books is nothing but an ass's badge for the slothful feelings, a conductor which carries off real sensations, a mere Protestant repetition of the rosary ; for as certainly as a young Catholic girl generally runs heedlessly over her paternoster, so surely will the young Protestant skim feelinglessly over the sentimental phrases in the sweet Protestant devotional books. Indeed, this fore-feeling which is printed in the books, restrains the real feelings of the breast far more than is done by the merely objective incitements to feeling which exist in a rosary ; for, if a man see before him, printed letter for letter, the subjective feelings which he might probably have taken the trouble of exciting, he certainly will not take the trouble ; and a young Catholic girl who reads something about the *Mater Dolorosa*, may still be moved by it, but it is impossible that the young Protestant can be so, who is obliged to read in a book—'O, how moving this is ! O, what do I feel at that ! O, how my heart is moved at this ! O, what woe does this excite in me !' &c., &c. Who would not

be moved by reading in the Bible the plain, simple, objective narrative of the death of Christ? but who, I ask, was ever moved by reading Trudge? who, pouring out his wishy-washy sorrow, like drops out of a wet sponge, boasts of it, and then solemnly begins: 'Let this song, this woeful song, be dedicated to thee, O woe!' Yet what further need we to know, than that in spite of all the innumerable sentimental whinings which we find in those writings, intended to aid us in our devotions, and for the use of children, our generation has evidently become careless about sentimentality; it is dry, ironical, and even to a certain extent, cold and hard-hearted, whilst former ages, which did not talk so much about the feelings, were really milder. This applies especially to the young. The more the milk of human kindness is extracted from their hearts, the drier their hearts become. Feeling, and again feeling, is daily inculcated; and what is the result? Dry old-fashionedness, and nothing but old-fashionedness."

I have said that the reproach brought against Wordsworth by Professor Wilson,—that there is an absence of some of the higher doctrines of Christianity in him,—applies to Carlyle. Wilson has brought a grievous charge against Wordsworth, that there is a misty religionism rather than a clearly defined religion, about him. This misty religionism is apt to evaporate. Men must have something definite to cling to; there must be something visible and positive, something that can be seen, touched, and known, and be present with us. Here, then, if blame be due, it is due to Carlyle; and here, in the spirit of fairness, blame I bestow.

I have now done. None are so conscious of the deficiencies of this lecture as I am myself. If, however, I have succeeded in making anyone think who never thought before, in causing any to search for the good and true: nay, if I have been happy enough to unsettle some, to make any doubt, or feel uncomfortable, I have my reward. Some of the things about which I have had to talk are sadly uncomfortable matters. I have had to show the starving brother in the midst of a luxurious age; men bowed down in the midst of much prate of freedom; a Christianity weeping and waiting to be applied: these matters are unpleasant, but physicians' tasks are not always pleasant duties. There are disagreeable potions contained in the pharmacopœia, and it is sometimes necessary they should be administered. I can but

thank you for the kindness and attention with which you have listened to a young man's words ; and hope that what in them has been true may live, while the weak or false things may be speedily forgotten. None of you can charge me with insulting your religious sect or political party. I have tried to teach those sublime politics which transcend mere party questions, and that religion which is higher than theologic differences or sectarian divisions.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

(BORN 1811. DIED 1863.) FROM 51ST GEO. III. TO 26TH VICTORIA.

IT might be a curious question for speculation whether a man would prefer to have the portrait of his character drawn immediately after his death, or whether he would prefer to wait some years until time had mellowed and softened and rendered more clear many of the fine points connected with it. With regard to a man's character, death seems to have lost its power except to take all that is likeliest itself to speedy oblivion. Be the answer to the question what it may, one thing is clear, that they who have lived with him can now weave for Thackeray a chaplet culled from the garden in which he has himself worked, a thing which could not be done fifty years hence.

Another question is, what is the meaning of the rule *nil nisi bonum* ? and ought we not to substitute *nil nisi verum* ? To-night, the two rules are almost one, and he who is so generous as to say *nil nisi bonum*, may be so just as to add *nil nisi verum* ;—standing by the one, we may keep the other, and obeying both, break neither.

I shall proceed to notice the life of that great, good man—Thackeray. It is a life without “hair-breadth ’scapes,” and wonderfully wanting in interest to those who like to be startled ; but full of beauty and thrilling interest to those who know that a good writer is one of God's best and greatest and loveliest creatures, and who like to see a great artist at his work ; who would like to have gone home with Michael Angelo, and seen the chisel with which the great Moses was struck, as it were, out of the rock ; or to have seen Raffael grind the colours with which he painted the “Transfiguration” ; or to have seen Shakespeare sin and suffer, in order that he might be able to write the history of sin and suffering : for these are things worth a lifetime to behold.

To begin, then, with the history of Thackeray, I will commence with what is a good rule, and one which I recommend to all—to mention a man's pedigree, when there is something worth stating. Thackeray's great-grandfather was Dr Thomas Thackeray, headmaster of Harrow, an excellent schoolmaster, and most worthy man. If you notice this fact, you will, in all probability, understand whence came that great love of, and perpetual leaning towards the life of public schools which marks all Thackeray's works, and which was in all probability strengthened by his subsequent connection with that finest of all schools, the Charter House. In addition to serving his country by his labours as a schoolmaster, Dr Thomas Thackeray also served it by presenting it with six sons and ten daughters, of whom we will centre our attention upon two daughters who married gentlemen in the Indian service—a fact which will account to a great extent for the great flavour of curry which runs through Thackeray's writings. His grandfather, who was in the Indian service, retired upon a competency, and his son Richard Thackeray, the father of the great novelist, was in the same service, and lived at Calcutta, where William Makepeace Thackeray was born in 1811, just one year before his contemporary Dickens.

In 1815, his father died, and he came to England in 1817, his widowed mother marrying Major Smythe. The ship stopped at St Helena, and here he was shown Napoleon by a black servant who had him in charge. This sight, and the sight of the palace of the Prince Regent, which was shewn to him by the same black guardian after his arrival in England, are both described with great force by Thackeray in his works. Then he went to the Charter House, upon the glorious memories connected with which, and the many names, since great in story, which have figured amongst the students in its old cloisters, we might dwell long and lovingly. From this school Thackeray went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had for fellow-students John Mitchell Kemble, and that greatest poet of modern times, Alfred Tennyson. He left Cambridge without taking a degree, but he did not leave it without doing something, for it is true that he published a paper called the *Snob*—a work small in many respects, but showing that he knew how to make powder, and also how to fire it when necessary. In 1831, he went to Germany, where he lived in

the same town with, and saw Goethe—the greatest man since Shakespeare—whose sun was setting in golden glory.

Soon after this, he was taken with the desire to become an artist, and to this end he went to Rome, and thence to his favourite city, Paris, to his favourite haunt the Louvre, shortly after which he came to London and commenced to write at first from love of literature, for his patrimony was what to this day would be called ample. (To follow him through the whole catalogue of his earlier works would be mere idleness, but amongst the most notable may be mentioned numerous contributions to *Fraser*.) But Paris was his delight. He did not love Frenchmen, because he was always too good an Englishman for that. He detested Louis Philippe, as every honest man must, because he knew him to be the greatest Pecksniff in the world. He hated French novels with a hatred which the genius of George Sand could not remove from his mind. But he loved Paris, because there he enjoyed the most perfect liberty. There is a time in every man's life when to live amongst civilisation is a great nuisance, and this was that point in Thackeray's life, and he appreciated the liberty he enjoyed. In Paris, nobody knows you or cares about you, and you return it back with interest.

After remaining in Paris some time, he returned to London, and found a group of notable men who were contributors to *Fraser's Magazine*, which was then edited by that great, gracious, and graceless man, Dr Maginn, to whom Thackeray behaved with the utmost kindness. Amongst the reckless race of men with whom he was then associated, Thackeray found the types of Captain Shandon and Tom Sargeant, and many others. It was then, also, that he learned that contempt for the so called Bohemianism of pots of porter and pipes of tobacco, and tavern revels and debt, which marks many of his works: and it was this contempt which earned for him, amongst second-rate Bohemians, the title of a "prig." Now it was that he published the "Yellow Plush Papers," which seem like the chips of a workman learning to do good work, and show how hard he worked and how long he laboured before being able to produce his great masterpiece, "Vanity Fair." In 1836, he aspired to illustrate the immortal "Pickwick Papers" of Dickens, and his sketches being refused as unsuitable by the great novelist, he turned his attention sedulously

again to literature, and showed himself to be without doubt the greatest English novelist since the days of Fielding. "Esmond," to my mind, stands out as the greatest novel of this century, and, whatever may be said of Sir Walter Scott or Dickens, since Tom Jones, the finest novel in the language. I say this, knowing that the majority of you are Dickens mad; but I say it in the firm conviction that I shall be able to prove accurately the truth of my assertion—for I differ from you, I am happy to say, with all my heart and soul and strength. At the same time I think that Dickens' novel, the "Pickwick Papers," which Thackeray aspired to illustrate, is one which future historians will find most precious, and will be least willing to lose.

After this, Thackeray joined a newspaper, and in so doing made the greatest mistake of his life. Still, it is not to be wondered at, for most men, at some period of their lives, distinguish themselves by meddling with that with which they are least acquainted. I think it is sometimes necessary that a man should be taught the value of money by losing it, and thereby gain a wholesome appreciation of the hod-bearers of life. The newspaper was got up by a company calling itself the Unpopular Newspaper Company, and was called *The Constitutional and Public Ledger*. Its literary staff was one of great talent, but it had not the advantage of a good business-men element. The natural consequence of this was that it died, and Major Smythe, with Thackeray, lost their money. From this time, he who had previously written from love of literature, had to write for money.

Soon after this, he married Miss Shaw, in Paris, and of this marriage we will say but little, for over it came subsequently a shadow, worse than the shadow of death, but of which Thackeray said nothing. One might speak of another celebrity, who, under similar circumstances, called in the whole of England to witness the scene.

A gradual appreciation of Thackeray's works has grown up but a short time back, comparatively speaking. Thackeray was a popular lecturer; his lectures on "The English Humourists" and "The Four Georges" deserve the highest praise. It is perfectly ridiculous that such men as Thackeray and Dr Johnson should have been rejected as candidates for seats in parliament because they were not what the world calls "men of business,"

for whom the great Liberal party manifests such an unaccountable and perverse affection. Thackeray became famous, and prosperous, and died, not full of years, but certainly full of honours.

Having now given some consideration to the life of Thackeray, the next question is to see the connection between the man and his works, and I hope to show that in his case, as in that of all great authors, the man is much greater than his works—his works being but the overflowings of a fountain never dry, and from which can be sent forth waters still sweeter and more copious in volume. There is no question much more curious than the similarity and discrepancies between men and their books. The majority of readers of books are disappointed when they see their authors. Most men are disappointed with the Elgin marbles, and why? Because they are so much like life, because they are so natural. And their disappointment at being brought into contact with a man of genius is of the same sort. He was so *natural*, and they who saw him wanted to see his style in his clothes.

Great men are divided into two classes. There are some who find the Elgin marbles natural, and some who have a spice of quackery—by which I mean anything that a man does to draw the attention and gaping admiration of the world, or a too great longing for eccentricity and oddity. There is no doubt that, with all respect to Pythagoras, he knew perfectly well that the public liked something to gape at. They like a robe thrown over the shoulder, and for a man to turn away with a great scowl,—just as in the theatre the man who plays the saint must snivel to the end, and the villain must remain a villain until the fall of the curtain. It is open to a man to take one of two courses—either just to be himself, and let fools have their say, and care nothing about them, or, understanding the public, to throw a robe round the shoulder, and mutter and start, and be Byronic, and shave the temple in order to look Shakespearean. All these are little tricks which sometimes great geniuses have not disdained. Pythagoras understood mystery-mongering perfectly, and he muttered and had a cloak to throw round him—a halo or a darkness, just as the hours seemed to require. In our old friend Diogenes, there was a touch of the play-actor in that tub business, and that famous reply of his to Alexander was not, I am afraid, impromptu—it existed

in manuscript in the tub. I am sorry to surmise it, too, but I think there was a little touch of it in the noblest of the Pagans—Socrates—who understood the public, and was a little more odd than he ought to have been. I am afraid that Socrates sometimes mounted the waggon, had a trumpet blown, and announced his moral pills. Certainly the great Napoleon understood the art. He knew when to start, and how to wear his cocked hat; for he was a great genius, and could have commanded the world's wonder and enforced its applause. Napoleon liked a little bit of quackery dearly. What could have been finer than when, sitting in the ruins of Moscow, after that disastrous expedition, he wrote a letter to Paris about the opera? He showed that he could fight Russians, and think about Paris—fight Russians, and think about the length of ballet girls' dresses. Louis XIV. knew the value of quackery, and so did Lord Burleigh, who did not always shake his head because he needed to do so, but because he had learned that a shake of his head went a long way with those who saw it. So with Bolingbroke, and Chatham, who never spoke except in his best wig. You have perhaps heard of the musician who never sat down to compose until he had arranged himself in evening dress, and you have heard that whenever Chatham was about to make one of his world-shaking speeches he assumed his best wig. Let us be charitable, and suppose that it was necessary for the cranium underneath; but still I am afraid that, after all, there was in it a touch of the mountebank, the trumpet, and the quack. As for Lord Byron, he understood the art perfectly; he knew the value of a little quackery, and he administered it most admirably. It is not for us to say whether this was right or wrong, inasmuch as it depends upon to what degree a man has to "tumble" for a company, and with what skill he estimates their taste in tumbling. But it requires a mind strong in its simplicity to take the nobler course—to say your say or write your book, and then do as you would if you had not said your say or written your book. To be perfectly natural is the most difficult of all arts, and requires in audience and reader a very simple and strong mind to get through the work of finding a great man perfectly simple. Those not thoroughly simple-minded play tricks, and the question is whether Thackeray played tricks, tumbled, and rouged, or whether he went on his

straightforward way caring nothing for the public, and caring nothing for the crowd of humble loving prigs that surrounded him. There is a splendid passage in "The Corsair," which explains what I mean by this:—

“ He bounds—he flies—until his footsteps reach
 The verge where ends the cliff, begins the breach,
 There checks his speed; but pauses less to breathe
 The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
 Than there his wonted, statelier step renew;
 Nor such, disturbed by haste, to vulgar view:
 For well had Conrad learned to curb the crowd,
 By arts to veil, and yet preserve the proud;
 His was the lofty part, the distant mien,
 That seems to shun the sight—and awes if seen:
 The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
 That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy.”

This passage explains nearly all the quacks of the high, solemn chieftain sort. We shall see by-and-bye whether Thackeray did this kind of thing. He was very fond of looking into the tricks of genius. He liked to be by when the preacher arranged his last curl before mounting the pulpit, and when the beadle was arranging his surplice so that it might fall in the best folds—the preacher being a man who ought to commend the gospel by his admirableness. Many people like to hear the gospel read by a darling; and curls disarm criticism. It is pleasant to see people get ready for their work, and the dressing-room was the room for him. His audience would be before the scenes, and behind the scenes was rather flat; but the dressing-room was the place for him, and there he would be found whenever he had time and opportunity. He spent much time in seeing the great people of the world dress. He saw Beau Brummell dress, with his three hairdressers, one of whom took the back hair, another the front hair, and the third the high intellectual hair. He watched the wonderful quack, Dr Dodd, and saw him get ready to astonish the public. Both great theatres gave their best actors to teach Dodd to read the services. Garrick taught him so to read the Litany that people came from the ends of the earth to hear him; Mrs Clive taught him to read the marriage service with much emotion, and the baptismal service with a kind, fatherly attention to the infant. Did not Woodward,

the actor, teach him how to say, "Dearly beloved brethren"? and also coach him up in the reading of an Epistle? Barry taught him to read the Communion Service until he nearly harrowed up the sinners; and the Athanasian Creed until damnation rolled round the church as thunder-storms sometimes do. He was the cheapest of quacks. When Lady Blessington declared in her book that she saw Lord Byron in a nankeen jacket and spectacles, do you like him so well? I try to read "The Corsair," but when I do so, I see the nankeen jacket and spectacles—it is like a picture painted over another, and the confounded nankeen jacket and spectacles will peep through. Why not paint him in curls, instead of in the disgusting nankeen in which there is so much bathos? It calls up remembrances of the mediæval spinsters of our early days, and of men who wore trousers which were too short and every way too small for them. I never yet saw a man wearing nankeen who did not look shrunk. It is the most unromantic tackle I know of.

If, then, men are to be blamed, the blame lies with the public rather than with the men themselves, and the blame will last until people can be satisfied with perfect naturalness and simplicity. Is an author like his book, or is his book like an author? The sentiments that authors draw are very often a great deal beautifuller than the actions which an author does. When it is known that a man who has for a long time taught the path of duty, has committed a meanness, people turn round and say that his long life has been a shallow hypocrisy, and the short time spent in iniquity has been a display of his real hidden nature. People say that a man cannot be a good poet unless he is a good man. This doctrine I do not believe. It is true that, to be a good poet, a man must be of good disposition, must have a good sight, often have good aspirations and good inclinations; and what are these without a sympathy with what is lofty, generous, and noble? I can imagine that Sterne was harsh to his wife; but he wrote tenderly of Maria. His wife may not have been a Maria, and there is a tendency to take out of the familiar, the exhaustion which has been brought about by the worship of the ideal. The cases, if you will hunt all through literature, in which an author has not been in himself as glorious as his works, are few. As instances of this, I may mention Milton,

Schiller, Bishop Warburton, Sir Philip Sidney, Dr Johnson, Addison, Cobbet, Jeremy Bentham, and others. An author cannot avoid painting himself in his works, a circumstance well known in the old times by him who said, "O, that mine enemy would write a book!" A book is the revelation of revelations, and is the one thing that betrays a man more than any other. It is often said that there are two views of life—the ideal and the real. Thackeray gave much thought to this, and though he had a model man and a model woman, he had a whole gallery of realities. On one side of his study he had the ideal, and on the other side the real. On one side were his Chrysostom, his Paul, and his Apostles, and on the other his vicar, curate, deacon, and beadle. And so it is all through literature, an author fills his book with two classes of characters, real and ideal. In Shakespeare, we have the ideal Miranda and the actual Stephano. The poet had seen all his great characters pass by; he had known Falstaff, talked to Dame Quickly, and had seen Mrs Page. Sir Walter Scott drew Rebecca from his imagination, but he had known Andrew Fairservice, and drew him from actual observation. The same remark applies universally, almost. Oliver Goldsmith was "a hero with chambermaids, and a coward to ladies," and this spirit he carried into all his writings. Books are absolutely necessary for an author to act out all that he is; for can we suppose that a man ever talks his best? No, indeed, it never can be done. Can you imagine Rousseau talking his reveries, or giving utterance verbally to all the world of tenderness which is wrapped up in his Confessions? Or do you suppose that Pepys would have spoken out all that he wrote in his immortal Diary? Shakespeare could not have told all the wealth of passion which he has put into his plays. It can only be done on paper—that wonderful confessor of the soul—and only through the pen. Who can wonder that the Commandments should be graven on a rock? or that the sublimest language of love must be written?

I find the connection between Thackeray and his books very close; he is thoroughly and intensely in his books. Nobody knows him so thoroughly *through* his books as *by* his books. Reading his books, we find a cultivated man—a man of natural genius, but that genius hindered a little at the beginning by too much cultivation, which, with a man of great natural genius, acts

like the clouds of a glorious day, that seem to hamper and hide the sun, until he not only conquers them, but gathers them into a long train of wonderful glory.

Thackeray, being an educated man, was modest, and withal a man of the world in the best and highest sense of the word. Amongst literary men there are two classes—hermits like Thomas Carlyle—a man who did not belong to clubs, who did not make morning calls, who did not put himself at the service of idlers and fools, who did not have his *carte de visite* portraits taken, and send them out in a wheel-barrow, who did not keep a footman; and we also have men of the world, like Thackeray, who was a member of several clubs, who sauntered down Pall Mall, and, standing at the bow windows, criticised the girls as they passed, calling this one a dowdy and that one a belle, who was critical upon horses, talked politics, smoked pipes, and went the whole round of life. We cannot spare these men of the world, who are growing as useful as hermits. It is very possible to be a good hermit, but very difficult to be a good man of the world. Perhaps your ideal of the religious man is a hermit—a man who never sits in the seat of the scornful (the scornful being those who read *Punch*) or walks with the profane (they being those who go to plays), but turns his back upon Babylon (that is, never goes to a ball). These hermits are uncommonly useful; but what is to become of the world if a man does not carry the lamp of true piety into the streets of Babylon? and what is to become of us if the godly people do not sometimes come down our way? We find that Thomas Carlyle kept under the mere ordinary robes of mortality an upright spirit, a truthful heart, and a pious soul. From his hermitage at Chelsea he sent forth his wonderful prophecies, which will in future years be set down next to those of the Hebrew Scriptures. Then, on the other hand, we have our Thackeray—a man of the world, great, and full of gracefulness, full of fun; criticising bishops, millionaires, and tailors; able to shake the brass out of a Prince Regent, able to whip this nation for its disgusting loyalty, able to scourge the aristocracy, able to criticise the democracy; a man who walked through life carrying the lamp of an upright character, a pure spirit, and a truth-telling tongue.

I find Thackeray a very generous man—generous to relieve

distress in all its forms, and what is more, generous to literary men, and to his contemporaries in the same walk of letters as himself. It is hard to admire a man in the same line of business as one's self, to do it heartily, to look at them impartially, as if they belonged to a different line. It is easy for a manufacturer to go to a cattle show, and admire a sheep of which he knows nothing; or for an ironmaster to admire a mountain of lard called a pig, well knowing that it will not influence the price of his own "pigs"; and people may admire wood-turning, knowing that it does not come out of their own heads; but for people in the same line of business to do this is difficult. Michael Angelo has done this, and Thackeray has done the same. His praise of the writings of his contemporary—and, in a degree, rival—Charles Dickens, illustrates this. And Thackeray's praise was not all praise; for who is all compliments, robs his compliments of half their value. It is only he who knows how to blame whose praise is truly choice. I hate the whole set of literature in which such men as Bill Sykes—those dirty, unwashed, nasty ruffians—are brought into decent company. I think a great novelist ought to have something better to do than to wash the dirty unwashed of his own day. He may paint an old ruffian, but it is a difficult matter to say at what age a ruffian becomes lawful. It is one of Thackeray's greatest glories that, throughout all his works, he has not been indebted to the Newgate Calendar for a hero—he could get rogues to paint without descending to such depths as that. In all probability, many of you will not like this, because you are Dickens mad. In addition to this, Dickens has, by contorting the English language—causing chimneys to "grin," window frames to "wink," and similar other monstrosities—spoiled it, and created a school of imitators who fill their "All Round the Clocks," "All Round the Weeks," and such like publications with such stuff from week to week. There was nothing of this in Thackeray, who loved his work and glorified it. His calling was that of a novelist, a tale-teller—to spin stories—a profession which some people have not yet settled the right or wrong of.

There are people in Birmingham who are dead against novel-reading, and who assert that it makes young women think themselves the heroine of the fiction, and gives young men very high

notions of chivalry, and a very low one of chicanery and robbery. But with Thackeray it was the readiest and the truest way of representing the spirit of the time, and he adopted it. His appreciation of his calling is finally given in those parts of his lectures on the Humourists which deal with Fielding and Steele. If any man knows "Vanity Fair" well, and "Esmond"—if he knows "Esmond" well, he knows the old days of Queen Anne; and if he reads "Vanity Fair," or "Pendennis," or "The Newcomes," he will see the man at the clubs; Rotten Row, and the riders thereon; how bishops are made, and what they do when they are made; how men wriggled into Parliament in the nineteenth century; how the theatre of St Stephen's and all its scene-shifters and candle-snuffers do their work;—indeed, he will see a very picture of life in the nineteenth century.

Thackeray was fond of eccentricities. He took a sham up between his thumb and finger, straightened it out, then smelt it, and then threw the foul imposture away. He was the greatest master of comparative anatomy in our time. It is a great study to be able to take a man mentally to pieces and dissect him. He had a fine eye for a snob, from the top to the bottom of society. He read it all, and knew where to find the particular bone—the snob bone. He said, "you notice in the anatomical structure of this creature, now called George the Fourth. that this bone is largely, fully, and freely developed;" and then, taking some wretched little snob from the middle classes, who lives in the back parlour in order that he may have a drawing-room; or some Major Ponto, who has a large silver dish, and in the centre a small landrail which he calls "game;" or a chamberlain "copper stick in waiting," or "Jeames;" after examination, he says—"The same bone, with a slight alteration of development." He had the finest eye for the importance of town society. He was unsectarian in satire. He never scarified the great in order to glorify the poor, or glorified the great to make out that the poor were all vile. There was one thing done by old Rymer that Thackeray did not follow him in. Rymer said that every king was a hero. If this is so, we shall have to declare that Prussia has headed a new page in the annals of chivalry. I have heard of a man who went to fight, and, retiring early, lived to fight another day; but it is reserved to our own time to read the history of a

man who went when the fight was over to see where the fight had been. When I went to a fight, I took my ticket and got there in time; but when I go again, it will be a day after the fair. Perhaps nothing much more just or severe has ever been written than the immortal epitaph on George the Fourth. You may call it savage, but it is true. He never acted well by man or woman. He was as false to his mistress as to his wife. He deserted his friends and his principles. He was so ignorant that he could scarcely spell, but he had skill in cutting out coats and an undeniable taste in cookery. He built the palaces of Brighton and Buckingham, and for these qualities and proofs of genius an admiring aristocracy christened him the First Gentleman in Europe. Friends, respect the king whose statue is here, and the generous aristocracy who admired him.

I might go on at some length to speak of "Vanity Fair" and its principal character, the "she-devil" Becky Sharp, but time will not permit. I cannot even glance at all the works of Thackeray, but I have endeavoured to show that his works are worthy of the man, and that the man was worthy of his works; that he was a man who understood the nineteenth century and the duties of a writer in it, and that he was a man who, without exaggeration or fuss, painted us such a picture of life and gave us such lessons in morals, that it is almost impossible to read them without getting wiser. He was a man who set himself to do what he *could* with novels, and put into them all the gospel and the law, and all the testimony that his upright life and true conscience had ever caused him to learn.

THOMAS HOOD.

BORN 1798. DIED 1845. (FROM 38TH GEO. III. TO 8TH VICTORIA.)

I HAVE not chosen the present subject with a view to show what a high-priest of fun Thomas Hood was, but rather what an admirable man he was, and what a true spirit and religious soul he possessed, and to correct the mistake I fear some people labour under that the man who is full of fun, mirth, wit, and jokes, is a shallow man. The most shallow of men is one who has no laughter in him, and the most playful of souls is the most holy, and the fullest of charity, tenderness, and loving-kindness. True merriment is one of God's greatest gifts to man.

Reading Thomas Hood's puns is out of my line, but in the course of my daily experience of men and women I have found the world so full of prigs, who by virtue of their stupidity believe themselves to be wise, and by virtue of their inability to see a joke, make it out that joking is bad, that I take a peculiar pleasure in showing Thomas Hood to be one of the gentlest, most charitable, and truest gentlemen of modern days. I cannot say to what Church he belonged, or what darling minister he sat under, but in all things that make a man King of Jesters, Prince of Punsters, Lord of Misrule, and Master of Mirth he was supreme.

The facts of his life may soon be told. His father was a Scotchman, but I thank God his mother was not of the same nationality; not that I mean any disrespect to my Scotch friends, but because one of the most difficult things in the world is to make a Scotchman see a joke—indeed, the greatest triumph in my life was having once excited a burst of merriment in a Scotch audience. Well, his father lived in London, and had something to do with publishing and printing, and Thomas, his son, was an engraver, and married a wife—a kind, loveable woman, who was gloriously dull at times to the merits of a joke, whose husband often “sold” her, and who did not dislike being “sold.” It is a

beautiful thing in Hood's life to watch the terrible accumulation of those petty sorrows which do far more to try the worth of a man than all the heroic griefs of this world. He was a poor man, and soon got into a partnership that placed him in debt. The debt was not so great as that of Sir Walter Scott, but it was a heavy burden upon a man who was poor in health, always dyspeptic, almost always miserable, who possessed a tender conscience and was always making jokes. He had to become an exile from his native land—to seek cheap living, good air, lowly cookery, and small payments—all to clear off a debt that was none of his; for in this world honest men must pay the debts of the knaves. For this purpose he went to Coblenz, thence to Berlin, thence returned to England, and again went to Ostend. His family was, happily in his circumstances, not very large, though he would himself have said, honestly, "the more the merrier."

I do not place him among the *Dei majores*, the great gods of Literature, but he is an admirable specimen of the *Dei minores*, and his works show that he possessed almost every qualification that makes a man loveable. It is said that God's mercies are tender mercies, and I am angry to see that the adjectives to be found in the Bible and other books are so often thrown away. Mercies are common, but tender mercies mean much more. It is a mercy to write a letter to a little child; but it is a tender mercy to take a little longer time about it, and write in Roman letters, so that the little one can have the proud satisfaction of spelling it over for himself. It is a mercy to give a servant a holiday; but it is a tender mercy when she asks for one day to give her two, so that she may not have to come away at nine o'clock, just when the dancing begins. And Thomas Hood, when suffering from painful attacks of disease, after he had got through his work would still spare the time to draw a number of head-pieces, tail-pieces, grotesques, and caricatures of all kinds on a scrap of paper, and then, taking off his shoes, would creep upstairs and lay it on the pillow of his children, so that when they woke up in the morning they might find this evidence of his love before their eyes. It was a mercy to make the drawings, but it was a tender mercy to take off his shoes and creep upstairs without waking the children.

I find in Hood another sure sign of a gentle heart: he had

some terrible hatreds. It is a common mistake to suppose that a gentle heart dislikes nothing ; but you must remember the necessity that exists for him who loves God truly to hate the devil much—that a passion for light implies a hatred of darkness, and that “the sons of God shall have no communion with the sons of Belial.” He had a great hatred of bigots, those who are not content with having a creed of their own, and with proclaiming it pretty loudly, but who say you cannot be acceptable to God unless you believe as they do, that honesty is not honesty unless it is in accordance with some peculiar version of some incomprehensibility. Then he hated pedants, those who, not content with giving the results of their reflections, must parade the machinery by which those results had been obtained before the eyes of everyone. The time in which he lived was an age of pedantries, of progress, liberty, penny magazines, Lord Broughams, and an enlightened people. He joined with Cobbett in thinking it were better to have the Inquisition, and poor people have well-filled bellies and good round cheeks, than to have civil and religious liberty with starvation. And so it is ; for has not divine method given the child an appetite long before it either has civil and religious liberty, or requires it ? Then he hated quacks, men who pretended to cure diseases they knew nothing about, who gave results without having ever mastered the processes. Hood hated all these, and, hating, must fight with them. His eyes always spied out the crack in the armour, and his shaft was sent direct to the spot ; but he never struck a man when he was down, nor followed even the vicious into the recesses of private life, to sting them in the domestic circle.

He dearly loved his wife, and had a warm affection for his children, to whom he wrote the most charming letters, and with whom he sympathised most closely. I find that Thomas Hood was a religious man, though I am not able to detect the church he attended or the minister he sat under. He was a man who feared God, spoke the truth, loved justice, walked humbly, loved sweetly, paid off his debts, was charitable towards all men, leaned upon the arm of God, confessed himself a broken reed in the hands of the Almighty. Beyond that I do not know that he was “religious.” So far as all these things make a man religious, he was so ; but he kept his religion as quiet and unobtrusive as he

could, and that is not the fashion now-a-days. Now, men are not content with believing, but must state the process by which they arrived at their belief, give their texts, articles, and creeds, and state what special services and revival sermons they attend. Instead of prayers being the most private of man's affairs, they are the most public. D.V. is printed on bills; there are saintly linen-drapers and glorified dealers in cotton, who "beg (D.V.) to open their shops on Tuesday next." The fashion is too prevalent in the present day, with some people, of affecting to regard Thomas Hood, and, in fact, all who minister to their amusement, with pharisaical contempt, and despising all those who gratify them by an exhibition of talent of a humorous, mirthful, or imitative character. It is the too common practice with some, after they have laughed at the humour of an actor, delighted in the performances of a gifted singer, wondered at the agility of a tight-rope dancer, revelled in the crack article of a magazine, or exploded at the too-it-it-too of a Punch, to go home and sneer at the hard-working beings who have, peradventure, spent a life in attending to the talent which has charmed them. But the only thing we can do is to thank God we are unlike these dreary children of convention, and endeavour to avoid falling into the same errors as they do. We must remember that a tight-rope dancer, perhaps, makes it the study of his life to amuse us, just as a minister makes it the study of his life to teach us. It is now as it has ever been; one man must carry the load of mortar and another lay the brick; one man make the design and another build the house; one man be William Shakespeare and another be Thomas Hood.

In order the better to bear out the assertions I have made respecting Hood's religion and childlike simplicity, I must refer you to his biography, written by his son, and to his inimitable letters to children. His biography, however, contains few incidents, and is simply the life of a man who was almost always poor, and almost always sick; an exile searching for cheapness and health, who met with an heroic and cheerful bearing the petty calamities of life; who showed his heroism by making a true jest of his calamities; who was the greatest punster the world has ever had, and the supremest master of nonsense the world has ever seen. There are some persons who cannot appreciate non-

sense, and for those benighted beings I must express my pity, for a man's afflictions ought always to be pitied. Hood's nonsense is the play of men ; children have their play, and it is very graceful ; monkeys have their play, and it is very comical ; and the wisest man must have nonsense, for nonsense is as essential to man as sense. It is essential to the health of the spirit, for, like the overflowing of a cup, it shows the fulness of measure. Some cantankerous persons are so miserable as never to have any nonsense, for their cup is never full ; their measure is like the measure of a scrimping shopkeeper who is anxious to get rich quickly, and to give no more than the law compels. Whenever a man has great genius and a large heart, it is sure to overflow in the shape of nonsense, and the best nonsense in the world is that of Thomas Hood. The immense benefit of punning in a social and philosophical point of view can scarcely be calculated, and more of comparative philology may be learned from the study of first-rate puns than from any other source.

It must be remembered that Hood was never in easy circumstances, never enjoyed strong health, and was never free from anxiety ; that his life was a continual running away from calamity to meet with it afresh ; that he was the victim of publishers, of booksellers, and of scamps ; and that through all this, cheerfulness, mirth, fun, good temper, gentleness of heart, and pity, never failed him once. Hood never had a superior in comicality ; he was the idealist of comicality, while the modern comic men are only the poor realists of the same. His nonsense has a bottomless absurdity in it, but it is always interesting, and (a sure mark of genius) the same book that pleases children pleases men. Children laugh at those of his works which every man who does not enjoy is a fool. Many men make jokes, but Hood's jokes arose in him spontaneously ; he appears to blunder into nonsense, and yet it always seems perfectly natural. The story that Charles Lamb, when reproached by his chief at the India House for always arriving late, answered, " Yes, but remember I always go away so early "—an answer that at the first moment sounds as if it was a reason, and is yet so delightfully absurd—is the best illustration out of Hood of what Hood's nonsense is. A basis of bottomless absurdity, having an air of logical method, distinguishes his gigantic fun and overpowering humour. Some of his charming

letters to children, and a letter to his friend Mr Phillips, illustrate this; also a letter in answer to an invitation to be present at an exhibition of the Manchester Athenæum, where some years ago they exhibited celebrated people upon a platform at two-and-sixpence a head, to be followed by early dancing, and where archbishops, bishops, statesmen, poets, and authors were shown for the amusement of the Manchester cotton-lords and their clerks.

A letter written by Dr Elliot at the time when a pension was asked for Hood, describes the complication of organic diseases by which the great punster and humourist was confined to a sick bed, and in this letter it is stated that the illness was aggravated by the anxiety and depression of mind, caused by his being compelled to continue his literary labours at times when he was suffering from disease.

Before I pass to the serious poems I will give you one or two specimens of Hood as a punster: I am sorry, and yet glad, that I shall be obliged to take some very old favourites, because everyone knows them, but they are Hood's best, and will well bear repeating. They are "Faithless Sally Brown," "Faithless Nelly Gray," and "A Parthian Glance." The novel of "Tylney Hall" is the most laboured and worst of Hood's productions, and "Up the Rhine" is the best.

I now come to Hood's serious poems, which are not among the greatest, though they are full of elegance and beauty; indeed, it is a matter of surprise that, being so good, Hood could not do better. His "Ode on a distant view of Clapham Academy," and his "Ode to Rae Wilson," may be taken as examples of these. I can well understand that people guiltless of fun themselves will consider it a very wrong thing to read anything like the latter. I am told that Rae Wilson was a good man, and he was certainly one who thought he had a little private commission to judge the feelings of others; was one of a class that used to exist who could gauge any man's piety, and who put forth a little rule of their own phraseology, and, unless a man could quote that freely, said he was not pious. I dare say you know some Rae Wilson, Esq., and in a day or two you will hear some of them talk. Of course I read this ode under protest, and with a feeling of burning indignation, as I admire Rae Wilson. But, seriously,

I ask if it is too bad, after the example of pious bankers, British and others, after the last few years of British commerce, the most sneaking, lying, rascally, canting period ever known, when they open a bank with prayer, and say grace before meat, and then swallow a widow and three orphans ; and next morning they are at it again. I say that these words, sharp as they are, are not too sharp ; severe as they seem, the only fault I know in them is that they are not severe enough. In the same poem Hood speaks warmly against the principle of making people religious by law, making them good by compulsion—Anti this, and main force the other.

Then there are those letters that passed between Hood and Sir Robert Peel regarding the poet's pension. Sir Robert Peel, in announcing the grant, said that he had read all Hood's acknowledged works, and acknowledged "the good sense and good feeling which have taught you to infuse so much fun and merriment into writings, curing folly and exposing absurdities, and yet never trespassing beyond those limits within which wit and facetiousness are not very often confined." Now you would hardly have thought that Sir Robert Peel could have read all Hood's writings in that busy life of his, which at the first sight looks all red tape and officialism. Some of you have got the idea that Sir Robert Peel was rigid and frigid, cold and icy ; but in reality no man had a more kindly heart, a more genial soul than that great statesman, who did not carry his best qualities on his sleeve, and who might be said to be like a fountain, sometimes ice-bound, but still having the waters of sweetness within. In his last letter, written by Hood when on his death-bed to Sir Robert Peel, he protested against that literary movement in which he felt he had had some share, that one-sided humanity so different from the universal catholicism of Shakespeare, and said, "The poles of society are already too far asunder. It should be the duty of our writers to draw them nearer by kindly attraction, not to aggravate the existing repulsion and place a wider gulf between rich and poor, with hate on one side, and fear on the other." Hood sinned a little in that way, but not much, and his repentance was greater than his sin. He died on the 1st of May, the month in which he was married, and in which all the noticeable events of his life happened, his last words being, "Oh Lord, say, 'Arise, take up thy cross, and follow Me.'"

MARTIN LUTHER.*

BORN 1483. DIED 1546.

(From a Birmingham newspaper, dated February 18, 1846.)

WEDNESDAY evening last, being the 300th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther, Mr Dawson lectured on some points connected with the life and character of that remarkable man. Having protested against the spirit of monopoly exercised by every religious party with regard to the great men who had belonged to it, and the partial eulogy bestowed by that party, Mr Dawson proceeded to notice the humble birth of Luther, as another of the many cases in which the world's heralds have arisen from the poorer classes of society. Tracing briefly the well-known facts of his early course, the lecturer paused at Luther's visit to Rome, and the bitter disappointment he experienced when the reality so little corresponded to the exalted expectations this zealous son of the Church had formed of this holy of holies. Bitter as was this lesson, Luther and the world could ill have spared it: what he then saw, justified what he afterwards spoke.

Mr Dawson drew a distinction between the use of strong and stern language against a public abuse or wrong, and the employment of such words in a private case; though bidden to forgive private injuries, the Christian is not forbidden to protest against spiritual wickedness in high places. Christ, ever gentle to the penitent, spoke sternly to the Pharisees and Scribes.

Luther, in common with many other reformers, failed to carry out to their legitimate length his own principles. Hence had arisen the great defect of Protestantism, which promised private

* These brief notices of Luther and Calvin are only inserted to complete the group of Religious Leaders, and to indicate Mr Dawson's attitude towards the Protestant Reformation.

judgment, but in many indirect ways broke the promise. The Reformers (and they are imitated by their admirers of to-day) asserted the principle of private judgment, but then limited its free exercise by authoritatively defining what it must arrive at. "You may think for yourselves, but—you must think as we do!" The Evangelical Alliance is a body which asserts private judgment, and then settles what verdict private judgment must pass; and refuses a place to all who do not arrive at the credence of that verdict. True that the thing is a voluntary union, but that does not alter the spirit which dictates so strange a contradiction. The practical denial of its own principles will lead to the gradual dissolution of Protestantism under its present form. The final battle must be fought between Authority, as embodied in Romanism, and full freedom as to be hereafter found in that true Catholic Church, towards which the most thoughtful of all the sects are feeling their way. Men cannot continue to dwell in this middle state; either, like Newman, they must go back to Rome, or else, as Arnold was doing, go forward to freedom.

Too harsh a judgment must not be passed on Luther and his fellows for this seeming denial of their own principles. A reformer is exposed to many painful trials and temptations. He finds that his words have stirred up strifes and divisions, introduced discords into families, chilled hearts and hands that once were warm, estranged friends, unsettled old convictions, and substituted doubts and uncertainty where before was belief, or at least, the calm of careless lack of thought. The blame is thrown on him: accusing fingers point at him, and with cruel unfairness and childish pettishness his surgeon hand is cursed, and not the disease which demanded his painful aid. Finding too, as Luther did, his name taken in vain, and the riotous doings of Münster fanatics laid at his door, he is tempted to halt, to become conservative, and to become authoritative and dictatorial in the hope of checking these unpleasant things. He forgets the Lord's words, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I am come not to send peace but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Mr Dawson proceeded to show how Luther had succeeded so

greatly *by appealing to the people*. A controversy was to be settled between the Pope and Luther. Luther appealed to the people, by translating the Bible into their tongue, and by preaching to them. All revivals of religion were accomplished by this means. Religion in this land, in the eighteenth century, had become weak and decayed. Wesley and Whitfield recovered it by preaching to the people. Religion was like that giant of old table—let it but touch its mother earth and it rose up again strong to do and to dare.

Mr Dawson concluded by exhorting all who desired to see religion truly revived, to turn to the people ; to go, pioneer-like, into the regions where there is darkness—thick darkness and the shadow of death.

JOHN CALVIN.

BORN 1509. DIED 1564.

ENGLISHMEN would admit and accept with relish and delight many of their (German) principles of criticism and thought in their initial stages, in their uncompleted and moderate condition ; but when these writers proceed to unfold the fruit to which the germ that we have been cherishing must lead, we close our eyes in fury and horror. We had rather hold in our hands the fair blossom, and keep it a blossom for ever, than find out its true nature, by having its ash apple put into our hands. For this reason it is that Calvin's theology has never had any more than an exceptional hold on our national mind. His stern logic compelled him to certain stern conclusions, from which, because they were legitimate deductions from his premises, he did not shrink. Thus he placed Christ Himself among the damned. He knew what he was about ; he knew that his system necessarily involved these conclusions, and that it must fall to the ground if they were denied. But we, with our characteristic good sense and illogical and inconsistent prudence, are only "moderately Calvinistic." That is exactly characteristic of us. We will not go on far enough to discover that our ground is false. We pause at the moment when the light of detection is going to dawn upon us. We will not let our theory carry us beyond what is stronger to us than any theory. And so we cherish our falsehood unconscious of its nature, hold the snake in our bosoms, but never suffer it to grow so warm as to become vital and bite. A pity but that we sometimes did—we should then fling it away, and know a snake again when we saw it.*

* "Nihil actum erat, si corporeâ tantum morte defunctus fuisset Christus : sed operæ simul pretium erat, ut divinæ ultionis severitatem sentiret, quo et iræ ipsius intercederet, et satisfaceret justo judicio. Unde etiam eum oportuit, cum inferorum copiis æternæ mortis horrore, quasi consertis manibus luctari." "*Ergo, si ad inferos descendisse dicitur, nil mirum.*" "Ut sciamus non modo corpus Christi in pretium redemptionis fuisse traditum, sed aliud majus et excellentius, pretium fuisse, *quod diros in animâ cruciatus damnati ac perditî hominis pertulerit.*"—PROSP. REV.

CALVIN AND SERVETUS.

CALVIN: BORN 1509. DIED 1564.

SERVETUS: BORN 1509. DIED 1553.

SOME months ago I sketched the life and character of that great man of the Church, John Calvin, showing his learning, his clear intellect, his devout zeal, his marvellous industry, his grand poverty, his great self-denial, his sickly body, his sad soul, his brave heart, and his unwearied perseverance; and showing also his errors and his failings (for he was but a man), his imperious temper, his despotic spirit, his egotistic magnification of himself and his office, his impatience of contradiction, and his petty, peevish anger against any man who assailed his views, his teachings, or himself. As time then failed, I had to leave to a future occasion the ugliest chapter of his history, the darkest blot on his great fame—his dealings with the famous Spaniard, Michael Servetus.

Such stories are not pleasant, and could most men follow their likings, they would blot such pages out of history, and read it without its shadows and crimes. But in reading history we must read *all*; and though I have now said all the good I can of Calvin,—and a more thorough admirer he never had yet,—still I have no sect or party to defend, and with the best desires to see Calvin clearly through this business, yet I think him highly and greatly to blame.

Servetus was born in the same year as Calvin, in 1509, at Villa Nueva, in Arragon; his father was a notary; and he himself was sickly and diseased in body, but with an inquisitive and restless mind, given somewhat to metaphysical fancies, and all his life vain, very arrogant, boastful, fanatic, mystical, noisy, acute, clever, learned, and brave. Leaving the study of the law, betaking himself to metaphysics, and astrology, star-gazing the night long, he at last came to Basle, where, in 1531, he published his first work, “*De Trinitatis Erroribus*,” a treatise on the errors con-

cerning the doctrine of the Trinity; maintaining that the Scriptures were the only sources of religious knowledge, and that they had a mystical as well as a literal sense, and that it was impossible for God to have a Son co-eternal with Himself. After this he went to Strasburg, having adopted the name Villeneuve (from his native place). He got his living by medicine, which he had studied with pertinacity, industry, and success. He went afterwards to Lyons, among the great printers whose names are so dear to the lovers of old books, and got employment by correcting proofs, which very few men then could do, as the work needed to be done by a great scholar. He afterwards went to Paris, and took his two degrees as Magister and Doctor in Medicine. In a book published at this time he laid down clearly the circulation of the blood; and some years after Harvey had made his discovery the theory was found in Servetus's book, the "*Restitutio Christianismi*."

In 1540 he removed to Vienne, and carried on a correspondence with Calvin; and when Servetus was tried as the supposed author of the "*Restitutio Christianismi*" at Vienne, Calvin (the great Protestant) sent the letters and manuscript he had received from Servetus to a Roman Catholic Court, by which Servetus was to be condemned. By such evidence he was condemned; but he contrived to escape, and fled to Geneva. Calvin had been offended by some remarks written by Servetus on the pages of his great "*Institutes*," and in a private letter said, "If ever he comes within my authority, I will never suffer him to depart alive;" but he gave not a hint of the sort to Servetus, who unsuspectingly fled to Geneva, into Calvin's own State, and where he ruled almost supreme. He intended to go to Italy, by way of Zurich, but was discovered and arrested, and by trickery and stratagem was induced to confess himself to be Servetus. According to a curious custom prevailing in Geneva, someone had to stake his life against that of the prisoner, and a servant of Calvin did so against Servetus. He was tried for heresy and blasphemy, in some thirty articles, one of which charged him with attacking and defaming the doctrine of Monsieur Calvin, minister of God's word, in the church at Geneva. He was condemned to be burned alive, and was treated with the greatest harshness and cruelty while in prison. Calvin got the opinion of the churches

on the matter, and all condemned Servetus, but none recommended that he should be put to death. But Calvin, whose personal feelings were deeply wounded, determined that Servetus should die, and that he should be burned alive. Servetus was thunder-struck and horror-struck. He begged and prayed that he might be beheaded, lest, as he plaintively said, the torture of the fire might make him say some lie and lose his own soul. Near Geneva, on the 27th of October 1553, Servetus was led forth, placed on a block surrounded by oak boughs (the wood unfortunately green), with a crown or chaplet of straw round his head, saturated with sulphur that he might be suffocated the sooner; and for half-an-hour, with green wood, and an executioner who was a booby and a blunderer, did that man slowly burn. The last words he was heard to utter were taken to confirm his heresy, as he to the last addressed Christ as the Son of God.

The moment he was dead a great reaction set in, and Calvin saw that he had done wrong. He wrote in defence of his unwise and barbarous act, as the first Reformer who put a heretic to death. None can deny that through the whole business there was too much personal antagonism, too much wounded vanity, too much vindictive animosity from Calvin to Servetus. Calvin was essentially an autocrat, could not brook contradiction or censure; and as our own Henry removed the Papacy in his own person to London, so did John Calvin at Geneva; whether wearing three or forty crowns, making himself the Pope of the Protestant Church in its views and faith. The special merits or demerits of Servetus need not be discussed; whatever were his works and life, his death did good in bringing Protestantism to its senses, and from the discussions and debates which followed his death Servetus probably did the world as much good by dying as he did by living.

ULRICH ZWINGLI.

BORN 1484. DIED 1531.

BY the order established by God, in Europe, Switzerland is physically and intellectually an important part. All the great rivers of continental Europe have their birth in that land. The Rhone running through France and seeking the Mediterranean, washing the walls of many an old city and many a noble vineyard, arises in Switzerland. There also rises the Rhine, so dear to the German heart, the noblest of the world's rivers; for, after all, the North American rivers have nothing but their bigness—no antiquity, no pedigree, and nothing in their scenery to be admired. In Switzerland, too, the Danube rises, and many other streams, showing the land to be the highest place in central Europe. It is a land which, for wise purposes, has been the greatest stronghold of human liberty that Europe has. Switzerland is the one great old republic amidst the endless emperors and kings who have wearied Europe and afflicted humanity.

In the days of the Reformation its John Calvin and its Ulrich Zwingli played most important parts. The great rigidities and severities of Calvin's doctrine formed probably the reasons why he, a Frenchman, had so little influence on France; and his preaching of Protestantism, severe in its nature and doctrine, did not fit it for the French mind; but when he came to Geneva he soon became lawgiver, preacher, and ruler,—ruling with an iron hand.

Ulrich Zwingli was a Swiss proper, born and bred there, with every peculiarity which has ever distinguished his country. He was born in 1484, at Wildhaus, St Gall, in the Toggenburg, one of the mountain districts of Switzerland, and his father was a farmer tolerably well to do in the world. Young Ulrich had a quick intellect, a clear brain, a brave heart, a pleasant sunny temper, and, as a little lad, had heard and learned the Bible

stories, as children always will (for there are none others to which they take so kindly). After living at Basle and Berne, he went to Vienna to study, and become a deep good scholar. Then he returned to Berne to pursue his studies, giving, like many a poor Scotch student, lessons to others, that he might get the means to teach himself. He was a dear lover of music, and found his flute a kindly friend; and as he sat down to play, the little children often gathered round, and the poor folks of the place, whose bread was scanty and their pleasures few. He found, like Luther, and many a much-trying much-tempted man, that love of music was a great delight, and intended by God to be a refreshment and a pleasure amid the many perils and dangers of a much-trying life. His reputation for scholarship extended, and he became pastor of a church at Glarus, and entered on his duties with a good heart and great energy. He was a Bible-reading man, and soon came to doubt a great deal of what the world counted religion, finding the most "religious" people the least godly, and that though Europe was then excessively "religious," the church was full of abuses, the manners of the clergy offensive in the extreme, and the morals of the laity filthy and corrupt. He soon began to get into trouble; preaching more to the people, telling them more of godliness than prayers, and that it was more important to live well than to pray any quantity of Ave Marias, Paternosters, or any such spiritual tread-mill work, which was then counted the sure method of reaching heaven.

At this time of his life, Zwingli, as a young man, committed some faults, of which he was afterwards thoroughly ashamed. Then, as now, it was the custom of the Swiss to band themselves to fight the battles of other countries, and Zwingli went with some of his countrymen to Italy, acting as their chaplain, and showing that then he deemed the office of soldier not inconsistent with that of priest and minister, and considered that a Christian might fight for other countries than his own. Returning from Italy, he was appointed preacher at Einsiedlen—famous for a black virgin, to which perpetual pilgrimages were made. Here too, he preached faith in Christ alone, and no trust in black virgins, miracles, and so forth, inflicting a sad blow on the trade of the place, and telling the streams of pilgrims how to gain salvation "without money and without price."

About this time Zwingli first heard of Luther and his doings, of Tetzel and his red cross, and his little cargo of indulgences, and of how Dr Martin Luther had put out his famous theses denying that indulgences had any virtue at all. The same thing had occurred in Switzerland. Samson had come round on his journey from the great Vatican house with his little ecclesiastical furniture and stock of indulgences, his brazen face, his lying tongue, his impudent lungs. In the course of his journey he came to Einsiedlen, where Zwingli preached, and as Tetzel provoked Luther, so Samson provoked Zwingli to the attack. Zwingli preached and denounced Samson and his indulgences, and Samson, finding his market spoiled, packed up his spiritual wares, and went elsewhere. The abuse of this doctrine of indulgences must not, however, blind the eyes to its real origin. In the early ages of the Church it exercised great discipline, and while it counselled repentance to God, it imposed a penalty (*pœna*) for the church itself. This *pœna* was sometimes remitted in special cases, and the abuse gradually grew. In the better ages of the church, it never claimed to pardon the *culpa* (fault) but only to remit the *pœna* (punishment), but the doctrine of plenary indulgence came in, abuses followed, and indulgences were extensively granted and openly sold.

Zwingli afterwards removed to Zurich, and there he met Samson again, and again exposed him, preaching again his broad Protestant doctrines of faith in Christ alone, and the necessity of reading and studying the Scriptures. Samson was recalled to Rome, taking with him from poor Switzerland eight hundred thousand crowns; and Zwingli, who loved his country with a passion, did all he could to denounce the unholy gains. At Zurich he remained enthroned in the great church, preaching to the people of their sins as a people, denouncing their custom of hiring themselves as soldiers to foreign States, labouring to teach them their duties in the world, and persuading Deans and dignitaries to give up to the service of the poor what they had long unrighteously enjoyed. In this lies the great distinction between the Swiss and the English Reformation; the English church lands have been seized and turned from their original purpose to add to the wealth of noble families and courtly folk; but in Switzerland, when changes came and the creed was changed, the lands left by pious forefathers were still devoted to the humble and the poor.

Before the fame of what Martin Luther had done and taught had reached Switzerland, and before the vindictive Frenchman, John Calvin, had taken up his place there, Ulrich Zwingli, the farmer's son, had gone to school and college, had left them learned and devout, had returned to his native country to become the king of his parish, the chief preacher at Einsiedlen, and with courage and boldness in that land of shrines and monks and bones, had lifted up his protest and his cry against the system which asserted that a soul was to be saved by any quantity of performances and contemplations of relics and bones, had forbidden the impudent impostor Samson, with his red cross and his bag of indulgences, to set up his place there, had driven him thence with dread and fear, and was promoted to the great town of Zurich, and, as I said, became the preacher in the cathedral there.

A council, or rather conference, was held to settle some of the doctrines in dispute between the Catholics and Protestants; but as they could not agree on the points to start from—as Faber, an honest man, owned that he knew little Hebrew, and very little Greek, though tolerably well up in Latin, and as Zwingli and his supporters appealed to the Bible only, and ignored Papal traditions, and other such matters—no really satisfactory result ensued. The Government protested against all violence, but disturbances soon broke out, relics were scattered, and crucifixes broken or destroyed. Zwingli had persuaded the canons to give up many of their revenues and livings, and to devote them to the service of the poor. No new novices were allowed, but the existing orders were suffered to remain; and great changes were gradually made. The rights of property were respected, and what had been left to the church was retained by the church for church purposes, although the form of faith and doctrine had been changed.

As the Reformation doctrines spread, it became necessary for the continental governments to determine which form of faith was to prevail. A conference was held to determine this point; certain cantons declared for the old faith, and certain others for the new; and it is a curious and interesting fact that the arrangements then made and the decisions then come to have remained to this day. This is a fact on which all should meditate; a fact unpleasant to the Vatican as showing certain necessary and irreconcilable differences in the human mind; and unpleasant to

Exeter Hall, believing that if Protestantism be preached to people they must at once accept it; and interesting to members of that Church standing between the Vatican and Exeter Hall, with no great love for either, and no dislike to some of their doctrines in ecclesiastical matters, as showing that many of these distinctions were vain, and all their efforts had failed to bring the people of one canton from the side which their peculiarities as a people caused them to take in Martin Luther's time.

The famous Protestant war in Germany arose from the previous oppressions of the people, and their natural anxiety in a time of change to get greater temporal as well as spiritual rights. The dogmatic and arbitrary Luther, whom I so much admire in many things, said a strong word for the peasants, but a still stronger for the princes, and was angry and vexed that they would not be content with a religious revolution, without seeking social and political change. Great disturbances arose, councils were held, and made the breaches wider than before, persecutions were carried on, even to burning an obnoxious person, and great violence prevailed.

Zwingli met Martin Luther with Melancthon and Lampadius at Marburg, to discuss the great question of the Sacrament. Luther interpreted Christ's command literally, and held not transubstantiation but consubstantiation. Zwingli took Christ's words in their simple sense, held the sacrament to be a symbolic institution, a commemorative rite, held neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation, and maintained that Christ's words, "This is my body," were no more to be taken literally than when he said, "I am the vine." Luther was very fierce and pettish, he disliked anybody to differ from his views, and when they parted hesitated to give his hand to Zwingli, and when he did so did it grudgingly as an act of Christian charity, and not as a sign of brotherhood. The doctrine of Zwingli, however, seems to be the one of common sense, and is held by the Church of Scotland, the Polish Protestants, and the larger part of the English people. In another point, too, Zwingli held larger and more liberal views than many Protestants even of the present day. He was the least dogmatic of all the Reformers, and had a great dislike to setting up opinions of his own, and making them articles of faith. In one sentence, written but shortly before his death, he showed the largest charity

in expressing his belief that they who had never heard the gospel preached, but who had fulfilled the law engraven on their conscience, whatever their age or country might be, would have their portion in eternal life. Zwingli clung mostly to the inward verities, and cared but little for those things which interested Luther so much, and plagued Calvin so often.

The disputes between the Catholic cantons (Lucerne, Zug, Schwytz, Uri, and Unterwalden) and the Protestant cantons (Zurich and Berne) resulted at last in war. On the 11th of October 1531, a battle was fought at Cappel, in which Zwingli was wounded, and was afterwards slain by a Catholic by whom he was discovered. Sentence was passed upon his dead body; it was quartered, burned to ashes, mixed with rubbish, and dispersed to the winds of heaven, which, like the Avon's stream with Wycliffe's ashes, seems to have symbolised the spreading of his doctrines far and wide throughout the world. He went to battle as a brave man should, believing that it was right to fight when the cause was just, and could be defended in no other way. After this battle, the Protestants were discouraged for a while, arbitration was sought, and a compromise was come to.

From the sketch I have given, it will be seen that Zwingli was a single-minded, pious, devout soul; simple, and free from all dogmatism; not without some enthusiasm and fanaticism, mixing perhaps too much with State craft,—the danger which waited on the immortal Cromwell, which lay about the path of Milton, and which besets every man who is wishful to make politics more pure and holy,—forgetting that he who goes among unholy men to make them holy, should be ever watchful lest they draw him down instead of his lifting them up. If, however, he had some few faults, he was surely what a Protestant preacher ought to be—a large-hearted, large-voiced, brave man. What he had to say, and people did not like to hear, he said with a shout, preaching perpetually against the crying sin of the Swiss—their hiring themselves to fight in *anybody's* quarrels, and to wrestle in anybody's cause. He was a preacher of an unusual pattern now, preaching an inward and an outward religion—a religion of the heart, the house, the State, the Church—with the voice of Boanerges against great public sins, but with the sweet tones of Barnabas to comfort inward and private griefs. Fierce in heart, he

was a pious, simple, truth-telling soul ; and overshadowed by Calvin and Luther, has not received all the justice he deserves. Between the impetuous and fiery Luther, and the clear, acute, cold-blooded, and clear-visioned Calvin, Zwingli has almost been forgotten. He had more learning than Luther, and less acuteness, but a good deal more candour than Calvin. Upon the whole, Zwingli, of all the Reformers, was in character and spirit most like the English people, and would have suited us well. He was not intolerably dogmatic ; he was gentle, yet strong ; and deserves far more honour than he has ever yet had. His confession of faith would be that of any intelligent orthodox Dissenter ; and concerning the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, Election, Grace, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, most intelligent orthodox Dissenters might adopt Zwingli's creed.

Zwingli, however, did not believe that Christianity would always remain just as he had left it. He knew life was short, and work long ; he had seen many changes brought about, and he expected change in the future. His bravery and boldness, his earnestness and simplicity, are a perpetual warning to all to go in the same spirit, to reject in the same spirit, and to hold in the same spirit, whatever views they hold, believing with many pious and holy souls, that what is held with full faith by them, may form no more part of eternal truth than the articles held by good and great men before their time.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

BORN 1688. DIED 1772.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG—long despised and often forgotten—has had the privilege that belongs to all men who devote their lives to thought—namely, that, as the world grows older, they get more revered, better known, and better loved. The men that are run after during their lives—the men of action, and the men of noise, receive their recompense in this world. Charles the Twelfth was a man of great abilities, a wonderful soldier, and, in some respects, a great king; but he is fading very fast from men's memory, whilst Swedenborg, the philosopher, who was his contemporary, finds a larger audience in every successive generation. It is one thing to have a name written in a book, and another to have a name always living, always connected with thought, and bringing forth, in every successive generation, new thoughts and new feelings. Swedenborg has the privilege of finding a larger audience every decade that passes, and in proof of this, I need only refer to the audience before me.

It would have astonished Swedenborg's friends, a quarter of a century ago, could they have known that in a few years a popular lecture would be given upon the philosopher and his doctrines, under the auspices of a Literary Institution.

Swedenborg has generally been looked upon as a mere sect-maker, and as one to whom the language of Festus to Paul is really applicable—"Much learning hath made thee mad." The restriction that hath so long existed as to the subjects which should be introduced in public institutions and assemblies, has also prevented Swedenborg, and others similarly circumstanced, from being understood. It is a rule with most institutions that there shall be no politics and no religion introduced, forgetting that when these two things are taken out of life and con-

versation, what is left is but like a chip in porridge—a dead, dry, dull, material, *hortus siccus* thing of this world and its affairs.

I am not here to declaim against Swedenborg. Those who know most of the man, know that, if one were so inclined, an evening would not be long enough to abuse him. How little, then, can I hope to do him justice in so short a time! I do not pretend to have read all that Swedenborg wrote, and for all my deficiencies in describing the man and his writings, I will ask pardon from those who know him well. My object is to roll away the clouds that fools have rolled around the memory of one of the most pious, most pure, most noble of men; who chose the pen as his profession, adhered to it all his life long, and laid down that great rule—that knowledge is worse than ignorance if it does not lead men to live wiser and better, and that all science is worse than idleness if it does not end in God.

Swedenborg fell on very extraordinary times. He appeared just when it was best he should come, as God always appoints. He came when men's faith had long ceased to have anything prophetic or inspiring in it. Religion had come to be a mere historical business. It was the dependent of past history. It prated in church about a living God, but in reality it was worshipping a God that had withdrawn from any active concern in human affairs. Or, religion was morality merely, without a spiritual basis; a sort of magisterial religion—very good if one never got into trouble. Afterwards came that grand and gigantic French Revolutionary talk upon all the internal, mystical side of life. This world and all it contains were reduced to what you could see and feel. Men talked about God as a "force," and put the next world into a coffin. They believed in nothing in this world but what could be seen, felt, and tasted with the bodily organs. They "believed in nightingales, provided they were roasted." In short, they looked upon this world as one great workshop and cookshop; and upon all the tales about spiritual communion, and influences, and utterances, as the tales of inspired madmen, and fools of old times.

Then there was another sore evil. The men who were really religious could not stand their ground against the encroachments made by the waves of the sea of science. The scientific flood was ever taking away scraps and morsels of the Christian endow-

ment, as the sea, in some places, encroaches upon the land of some beneficed clergyman. There were good people who thought that Bible truth and scientific truth could not be harmonized, and therefore they took their stand upon Bible truth; and when they were very honest, they said plainly that knowledge must be twisted to meet the literal statements of the Scriptures. On Sunday people felt bound to admire the spirit of the New Testament, and they would rejoice in turning one cheek if smitten on the other; and the next day would curse the smiter, and rejoice in a man who had what they called "plenty of spirit" in him, who would resent rather than receive an insult, and, upon the whole, on Monday they thought the Duke of Wellington was much more of a man than some of the saints. By and bye they put religion into a little world by itself, and tried to systematize trade and politics, and all other matters, and place each under its own set of rules and morals. Thus we have the "political world," the "religious world," the "scientific world," and circles and worlds without number, governed by different moral codes, and with very little sympathy between them. Now, all these things are evil. It is an evil whenever a man's religion enters into a battle with anything that is not immoral and sinful, and so a wrong to conscience. That cannot be a great Religion that cannot take into itself everything that is not hostile to the life and light of the Lord God.

What this age wanted, then, was some reconciling faith—a faith in which Religion and Science would be brought together and married. The history of the world is a contest between the material and spiritual elements in man; in one age the spiritual having the ascendancy, and in another the material. Now, if any man could show that this world is *not* a "waste howling wilderness;" that body, soul, and spirit are *not* separate things, but one within the other; that man is in heaven while in time, in soul while in the body; that every duty is not to be considered beautiful or important according to the effects that follow from it, but in its essence—we should welcome him, and gladly receive his teachings. This contest between heaven and earth, religion and science, body and soul, duty and delight, Swedenborg has done much to set at rest. If men had studied the Gospels, they would have read that when the wine flagged at the marriage festival, in

Cana of Galilee, it was supplied by miracle. But as for ascetic people, wearing hair shirts, they have thought they should reach heaven by some rope-ladder, or a flight of wings, and that the less flesh they carried the sooner they would get there.

Such, then, were some of the signs and portents of the times when Swedenborg appeared on this world's stage. It would be useless to dwell long on his life. It was a quiet life, and there are not many startling facts in it. Let us see, however, if there are inducements enough for us to become students of his writings. He was born in that fine old Scandinavian land of Sweden, that has blessed the world with so many men of thought and action. His father was Jasper Svedberg, Bishop of Skara, and his son Emanuel was born in the year 1688. He was not a very jovial sort of a boy, and of his early life we have not many memorials, beyond the fact that he was given to thought and speculations on religious matters. Some men must begin very early in life the great work they have to do.

Swedenborg went to the University of Upsala: in his studies he was diligent, patient, and laborious, and at the age of twenty-two took his degree as Doctor of Philosophy. In 1710 he came to London, and had a narrow escape with his life. At that time an epidemic raged in Sweden, and vessels that came to this country had to undergo quarantine. Swedenborg was induced by some of his countrymen, who came off in a boat, to go with them into the city. For this he was very near being hanged, and was only freed under the condition that if anyone attempted the same thing again he should not escape the gallows. It was his custom to resort to all places of learning, and we therefore find him at Oxford, at Utrecht, at Paris. Everywhere he was perpetually working, and very soon he was perpetually writing. Of his poems—that is, those in metrical form, published in early life—I cannot say much. His great poems are to be found in his after religious books. In 1716 he commenced his "*Dædalus Hyperboreas*," a periodical dedicated to the record of mechanical and mathematical inquiries and discoveries. He then became acquainted with Polheim, Charles XII.'s Councillor of Commerce, and, while living under Polheim's roof, he wished very much to marry Polheim's daughter. He got a sort of agreement on the matter from the father, with the daughter's signature, which was

attached from feelings of filial obedience. This agreement, which gave the young lady uneasiness, her brother stole from Swedenborg's desk, and put it in the fire, which to Swedenborg was a great grief at the time; but he was a man who had other work to do than to sit and watch the ashes. In his after life he was on one occasion jocosely asked if he was ever desirous of marrying, and he said he was once on the road to matrimony, "but," said he, "the lady would not have me." However painful it might have been to Swedenborg to miss Lady Polheim, it was a great good to us all, and perhaps a blessing to the lady herself.

In 1718, we find him at the siege of Friedrikshall, with Charles XII. He there ingeniously planned rolling machines, by which two galleys, five boats, and a sloop were conveyed overland a distance of fifteen miles, and under cover of which Charles was enabled to carry on his operations. In 1719, Swedenborg was ennobled, not made baron, as is generally supposed. He was at this time appointed Assessor of the Board of Mines in Sweden, and perfected his studies in metallurgy. In 1724 he published some of his works on Natural Philosophy, and one on the Philosophy of the Infinite. In 1744 appeared his great work, "The Animal Kingdom," and in 1745, "The Worship and Love of God."

In all his scientific doings and works he was a patient, exact, and practical man. Of all the men ever called dreamers, Swedenborg was the least like one. He meddled with all knowledge, and was a quiet, methodical, orderly, patient, duty-doing man; and it was with this basis he was to uprear that which afterwards made his name still more famous—his attempt to discover the nature and properties of spirit, and to penetrate into the unseen world.

This great change occurred between his fiftieth and sixtieth year. Up to that time he had been a man of science. In the fifty-eighth year of his age, he appears in a new character. He says on this subject:—"I have been called to a holy office by the Lord Himself, who was graciously pleased to manifest Himself to me His servant, in the year 1743, when He opened my sight to a view of the spiritual world, and granted me the privilege of conversing with spirits and angels, which I enjoy to this day. From that time I began to print and publish various *arcana*, that

have been seen by me, or revealed to me, respecting heaven and hell, the state of man after death, the true worship of God, the spiritual sense of the Word, with many other most important matters conducive to salvation and true wisdom."

Now, here is a very large claim put in by Swedenborg. I suppose my audience are Christians. Where is the extravagance? Swedenborg asserts that there is a spiritual world. Is *that* a novelty? Do you not believe in a heaven and a hell? Can you tell when intercourse with that world ceased to be possible? Can you draw some sharp chronological line to define when spiritual gifts ceased? There is nothing in all Christian theology so loosely drawn as the line when gifts and graces of a supernatural kind ceased out of this world. Here they were, and when did they go? There has been an unbroken series of churches that have asserted that these supernatural gifts never have died out. Yet Christian people treat Swedenborg's claim as a seer of visions as *a priori* ridiculous. How angry people are at the supernatural claims of those they do not like! If Colonel Gardiner gets converted by a vision, and professes to have seen Christ crucified on the cross, forthwith Dr Doddridge writes his life, and the Religious Tract Society publishes many editions of it, without note or comment, to say, "We are very sorry that Colonel Gardiner should have been so fanatical as to attribute his conversion to a vision." I might show several cases. A member of the Society of Friends is not at all put out by George Fox's illuminations and voices. Bunyan had visions; but then Bunyan was a Baptist, and belonged to our regiment, and so he had a license. But, on the other side, the feeling is that if you are not of us, if you have visions, then you are a fool and a madman. "But," they say, "Gardiner's vision was only once, and Swedenborg's visions lasted through many years." The marvel is that the thing is done *at all*. It is not the number of cases, but the thing itself that is disputed. It is quite as marvellous to have one vision as a thousand. I don't say that I believe Swedenborg's claim at present. I leave that, but I would ask, Why do people laugh so much at him? The great men of the world have all voted on that side of the great question—Socrates and Plato of the old world; St John and others in the New Testament; Origen, Plotinus, Jacob Behmen, Pascal, Fenelon—all the great men

believe that underlying the sensuous, visible world, there is a spiritual and unseen world, in which may be discovered the essences of things.

Swedenborg is therefore in good company; his inward or spiritual eyes were opened. Some people complain of the abtruseness of his books; but I believe there is not a sentence in them that could not be made plain to an ordinary audience. Swedenborg did not say he was inspired, but only that his spiritual or inward vision was open. He said that men's inward eyes were overclouded by sin, or they would see and hear what was now hidden from them. I would ask you if you have never heard in the songs of birds more at one time than at another? And what is this but the quickening or opening of some inward sense? Swedenborg said there was an inward sight and an inward hearing. It is a phenomenon running all through history, that as a man greatens and brightens, all life is altered to him. Did you never marvel where Wordsworth and Byron and Shakespeare found all their bright thoughts? *You* never had such ideas visit you. No; how could they strike you if your eyes were scaled? What was the difference between Shakespeare and other people? The difference was that there were eyes within the poet's outer eyes; there were spiritual eyes as well as eyes of the body, and under the visible forms of nature there lay a significance, a beauty, and a meaning that was hidden from the common observer, but which was seen by the poet's soul. So says Swedenborg—"For this spiritual world around us there is an eye prepared." It is not shown to the body's eye, and God was pleased to open his inward eye, and these things were made plain to him.

From this time Swedenborg dropped his secular duties, and gave up his assessorship. The king, in consideration of his long and faithful service of thirty-one years, would have continued his salary, but Swedenborg desired only half of it. He then devoted the rest of his long life to the one great purpose of reforming the theology of his time, and to found what he called the New Church. His spiritual gifts soon got noised abroad, and some thought they meant fortune-telling. A widow Martville sought his advice for the recovery of a lost receipt for a sum of money that had been paid and was demanded a second time. Sweden-

borg was kind, and did not scowl her away. By means of his spiritual privilege he conversed with the deceased husband who had paid the money, and the receipt was found ; but those who think that a prophet is no good except for the lost spoon, or that this great man was only good for fortune-telling, will find that he kept clear of that.

When Swedenborg began to write these great heresies, a worthy bishop and a doctor got up a complaint against him. The doctor, whose name was Ekebon, had the honesty to say of himself, that he took great care not to examine Swedenborg's works. Don't read what those opposed to you say, as Sydney Smith remarks, lest you should be prejudiced, you know. Swedenborg, however, was a man of good connections, of high repute, and of such a calm, quiet, blameless life, that it was found impossible to get up any very great stir about him.

In 1771 we find him in London again, and in 1772 he died, in Cold Bath Fields, at the age of eighty-five. A little before his death he was seized with apoplexy. He was at this time visited by a Lutheran clergyman, who asked him if he adhered to his spiritual revelations? on which the dying man lifted himself up, and said that as he had made no pretensions in heat or extravagance, there was nothing to revoke in the hour of his death.

His life being closed, I will turn to some matters in which, to me at least, Swedenborg is most interesting. Let us fancy that Swedenborg and his works stand like some great temple, and over one of its doors there is this inscription—"The invisible things of God from the creation are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made;" for that should be the writing over every Swedenborgian porch in the world. And over the other door of the temple there is written—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." These are the two great mottoes the man's life suggests to us. Entering into this temple, I find that this house which Swedenborg built to God is very much like Solomon's temple of old, or some of the great shrines in Catholic lands. It is not a little mean building—a meeting-house, square drabbed and whitewashed—but a great majestic temple; not where logic is despised and learning unknown, but into which this great man brought everything he could lay his hands on—all that philosophy and learning could bring; and yet everything has

written upon it, "Holiness to the Lord." Swedenborg is, therefore, to my mind, attractive; for if there is anything I dislike it is Manichæism—that which this country is so full of—miserable Puritanism; Religion warring against Science and Art. In this man's religion, what I admire first, but not most, is the idea that religion does not require of us to become foolish and dull, grave and grim; that it is not required of a man that, in order to become a lover of God, he must also be a lover of ugliness, meanness, and deformity. Swedenborg gathered more knowledge than all other men, and he carried it all as an offering to the shrine of God.

I wish now to enter upon the consideration of one or two of Swedenborg's principal doctrines. The one that interests me most is the doctrine of "Correspondences;" but an outsider like myself can hardly be expected to treat it in orthodox fashion. There is no such thing as an *accidental* correspondence of natural and spiritual things. Swedenborg showed this clearly. He taught that everything was first in spirit and in thought before it was in body and in form; that therefore, whenever you lay your hand upon a thought or an idea, it has its counterpart, its sign and type, in this visible world. Hence, there is a connection between the tones of the voice and a virtuous life: the voice sweetens as the temper sweetens. In like manner, every feature and every motion is indicative of the spirit's quality. One might even make the ugliest man on earth beautiful, without rouge, carmine, or brush, by calling up to his memory his mother's words and image, or telling him some tale of old that would stir his affections to their depths. Such is the connection between body and spirit, that the change of the inward always changes the outward. The debased part of our population daily grow uglier. As a nation becomes educated, it grows, not handsomer, but more beautiful. As men sink down in morals and intellect, beauty decays, and they take their place in the sty of sensualism. Plato well said that only a good man could be a beautiful man. Mere handsomeness is only animal. What Plato meant was this, that beauty consisted in the development of those inward senses that shine in the eye, touch in the fingers, and are heard in the tones of the voice. This he pronounced to be real beauty, and all this can be produced out-

wardly only by being first wrought inwardly, by inward worth, by the divine within us. Bodily beauty is but the weed in which the Lord dresses goodness. Outward beauty, which is of God, is the finger with which He beckons us to come up higher and behold the "beauty of holiness."

Swedenborg said that man is a microcosm, a little world, in which can be found every mechanism of the great world. The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms are all in man. He taught the great doctrine that the least things are, in form and function, the same as the greatest, and he proved it. Swedenborg placed before us the great strings of principles, on which we may string facts like so many beads. He says of the lungs, that the initial of the lungs, the beginning or the least lung, is of the same form and function as the total lungs. In crystals, every fragment has the same number of facets. Thus Swedenborg taught us to learn little things from big ones, and big things from little ones. As to the harmonies between colours and tones, they are perfectly familiar to all. There are also relations between forms and colours; between morals and mathematics. Morals are only mathematics in a different sphere; and morality and Euclid are the same book read in two different ways. The right line of geometry becomes the line of rectitude in morals. A knave does things in a roundabout fashion, instead of going in a direct way like an honest man. As Coleridge said, "A knave is only a roundabout fool." Another illustration: Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. Now, set a cultivated man opposite to a low, vulgar creature, one who knows only beer and skittles, and tell them that they are men and brethren, and the educated man would turn aside from the other as a being with whom he could feel no sympathy. Here are beings seemingly unequal; but teach them that being both created by one God, from one heaven, they must look to some common point above them, and out of themselves, and then the first dim sense of their being equals in comparison with the Infinite, will dawn upon them. Compared with Him they are each nothing, and are therefore equal to one another. Let men forget themselves, and meet in something greater than themselves, and they will acknowledge their common brotherhood.

Swedenborg's great principles of series and degrees, of influx

and efflux, are proved to be true by their universal applicability. He explained the doctrine of the Incarnation of Deity more clearly than any other man that ever wrote. He *proved* that God was made flesh, and that his name was called Emanuel. It was with him no cloudy doctrine of theology, but a necessary doctrine of human existence. He was, too, a great anatomist, and the first that made anatomy a pleasant study. He went out into nature with a guiding principle, and he had this great merit, that he sought the soul where God had placed it. Hence, he says, "I took the analytic mode to find the soul." What a check to materialism this! In Swedenborg's writings there is room for phrenologists and others, provided they do not stop at their own little circles. There is no greater blunder made by the practical people of the world, than the neglect of anatomy. Till Swedenborg's time, the dissecting room and the scalpel were words of horror. Swedenborg turned anatomy into a glory, a liberal art. There is nothing so little studied as anatomy, and nothing that more deserves to be studied. Out of Swedenborg's anatomy we may learn politics, and social knowledge; the best principles of drainage and ventilation, and all the laws of mechanics, are found in the human body. When God made the world, he hung his own picture up in it. Read Swedenborg often if you want to have an intimate knowledge of the walls of the temple, the place where God puts spirit. Swedenborg justified poetry, and as a natural philosopher he reduced similes to a science. He completed the circle of knowledge; he began with God, and he leads all things back to God again. I may utter Swedenborgianism in this sentence—"Of one thought, by one thought, God made all things which exist in this world."

Then there is that doctrine of Heaven and Hell. Swedenborg maintained that heaven is not a space or place, but is internal and spiritual—that it is a state of the mind. It becomes one to speak charily of the popular heaven and the popular hell. It is supposed that if one can but get inside heaven, just squeeze in, he is all right for ever. Now, Swedenborg could not enter into this doctrine. He had meditated upon these words of the Lord, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." It is possible to make a heaven below, or a very hell upon earth. How? This little heaven may be in a barn. How is it made? By the pouring

out from loving souls and hearts all blessed influences. It is a state of the feelings and emotions, rather than a geographical external form, or outward place. Thus, Swedenborg insisted upon the awful doctrine, that every hour of our lives we are building up our own heaven or our own hell; that every hour, like the insect, we are weaving round us a spiritual body in which we shall dwell for ever, and that every feeling, every word, produces a spiritual state to match. Every indulgence in sensualism adds something deformed to this state; and, instead of one great limbo, in which the fool, with his eleventh hour conversion, is set upon the same footing as the man who has gone through a life-long struggle for the same object, Swedenborg said that each built up his own house accordingly. Swedenborg asserted that the outward face of the spiritual world is not different from this; that as in this world a tree is one thing to one man, and another thing to another man, so it is there. I like Swedenborg for having nothing to do with disembodied spirits, but he gave a body to every one—as St Paul has it, “a spiritual body,” fitted to the spirit, formed by the spirit, woven round it, created by its own acts and feelings; and this is a more noble doctrine than that vague, dreary kind of existence, which is commonly supposed to await us hereafter. Swedenborg knew that there are no beings who are made angels off-hand. He taught that heaven is the great end for which exist all worlds and all life, and that its inhabitants are the eliminations from all worlds of the noble, the holy, and the just. What is the meaning of all this world of ours, with all its noise and trouble? It is a place for the fitting up of souls to furnish heaven.

Swedenborg's Spiritual Diary is a strange book. It is a methodical diary kept by him of his experiences in the unseen world. It is a terrible book, and was not prepared by Swedenborg for publication, but kept for his own reference. Much of it I do not believe, and I cannot. This Spiritual Diary is looked upon as the most bedlam book of all that Swedenborg wrote. It may be regarded either as a correct map of things as they exist, or as a map showing how a great man supposes them to exist. I take it in the latter sense. Swedenborg says that lazy luxurious people are punished in the other life—that he *saw* them punished—in a manner so horrible that I cannot relate it or believe it. Swedenborg

makes exceptions for queens and such like that cannot help it. The punishment was so terrible that even the spirits in the next world could not look at it. It was a tremendous punishment. But there seems to me a want of correspondence in the nature of the punishment, in its quality and amount, and I have not been able to look upon it as a picture of an objective reality. I have found the Spiritual Diary so quaint, so undesignedly witty, so awfully wise, such a sublime poem of all the ways, and habits, and customs of men, that its like is not to be found. It is theological, but thoroughly practical. If Swedenborg ever showed a want of mercy, it was for men who did not believe in good works; who preached justification by faith alone, as some people do, as if good works were dead weights to a man in his ascent to heaven. That provoked Swedenborg's scorn and indignation. He represents Melancthon as being engaged in writing a treatise on Justification by Faith, and as the writer elevated his mind to the consideration of charity, or sunk it to the contemplation of faith alone, he was alternately elevated to a higher sphere in the spiritual world, or sunk down into regions of obscurity and cold. I don't ask you to receive that Diary in any other way than as the marvellous utterances of a man who was morally and mentally incapable of a lie, and not likely to be deceived. The book is a thorough carrying out of the moral purposes of ethical justice into another world; it is the carrying out of that great principle of the sequence of doctrine and morals, which is as certain as that of gravity or weight, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The doctrine of compensation is perhaps the one which the world is least disposed to believe. There is no very great faith in men that they *cannot* do a bad action and not suffer for it. People *will* reason, perversely, that because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the hearts of men *may* be set upon doing evil. To Swedenborg, death was only an unclothing and a clothing upon, and therefore if a man begins something to-night, and he dies to-night, that thing will not be lost. If begun here, it must proceed towards its end, for its recompenses and rewards. I know not a book so terrible to a man who does wrong, as this strange bedlam-be-called Diary of Swedenborg. It is a book that burns like fire all the foolishness and rottenness of life. It makes a man who is indulging in

wrong-doing tremble at the thought of passing from this world into eternity. It is the severest and terriblest vindication of moral justice, of moral sequence, of necessary recompence, and of consequent reward, that was ever written.

Swedenborg's doctrine about the Bible—his division of the books of the Bible into two classes—seems to me wanting in evidence.

I have tried this evening to get you to see that this man will enable you to walk through Nature understanding its end and purposes, to see its essences and modes of being. Swedenborg honours second causes. Second causes are all necessities of the First Cause—God being the Cause of causes. Second causes are, to Swedenborg, theological; he admitted them into his church. To his disciples, there are no difficulties about particular providences, and a general providence. To them, body and soul are admirable friends, and when this body is done with, they know they shall have another, and a better. Swedenborg is a calm and a quiet but a pleasant writer. Under his rule, you may be as scientific as you like, provided you love God and your neighbour. You may be a learned pundit, and yet a humble Christian. Hence, I consider him one of the greatest harmonizers in science and theology.

Believing many things different from Swedenborg, he has yet taught me one thing, which is—to travel the road of life from Dan to Beersheba. He pours out of himself so rich a stream of truth that one cannot but listen to him. He says you may be learned and pious, a doctor in divinity and a doctor in philosophy at the same time; that you may go to college and to chapel, and serve God equally in both. You may eat, drink, and be given in marriage, and for all these things you will have no shame, and conscience can bring no charge. If I were going to be shut up in prison three years, Swedenborg's books would be my choice, and at the end of three years it would be six more before I should find them uninteresting, strange, or dry.

I am avoiding his theology, because, as you will see, if we should get into the doctrine of the Trinity, you might complain that it was not fit for the place and the occasion. Suffice it to say that Swedenborg was the justifier of the poets, the expounder of symbols; he taught that instead of Nature being dead, material-

istic, and barren, it is a house informed by spirit—a house of clay, but filled with divine fire, and that every step in Nature is a step to that great altar which conducts the worshipper to the throne of God; and up through the ranks of angels you rise higher and higher, until you end in Him who is the Cause of all causes, Beginning and End. In conclusion, he asserts that the more truly learned you become, the more you know—of necessity the more near you must be to God. I say, then, that however you may judge of this man, you cannot do otherwise than admire him, as teaching that a man may be at once simple and profound; a Bible-believer and a humble Christian soul.

JOHN WESLEY.

BORN 1703. DIED 1791. (FROM 2ND QUEEN ANNE TO 31ST GEORGE III.)

I CANNOT but congratulate this assembly as much as myself that so many should be willing to listen to a lecture on a man who, in the days in which he lived, was very apt to be set down as a fanatic, and whose great claim to consideration is not that which the world most values or most praises, but whose whole life was heartily and thoroughly given up to the promotion of the greatest safeguard a nation can boast of—the fear of God, and the practice of His holy will.

There are two or three things which it will be necessary for me to premise before entering upon my subject. There are some present, I perceive, who belong to the sect which holds the honoured name of “Wesley.” Let me efficiently warn such that John Wesley does not belong to you now-a-days any more than to others; because it is the privilege of a great man by-and-bye to get beyond the bounds of his family. Wesley was a man too large for a sect; he belonged to his country, and, better still, to the world; he belonged to those of the true Apostolic succession—the true Christian Church—however much some of the members of that Church may differ from him in point of doctrine, or smile at some of his peculiarities or weaknesses. Hence, others claim to take as much interest in Wesley as Wesleyans themselves do. Perhaps we shall not find him as Wesleyans find him, but I shall read him with as much faithfulness as possible. As to agreeing with Wesley’s theology, I do not; I do not pretend to, and do not wish to do. But if I differ from it—if I were therefore incapable of telling the truth about him, or were capable of admiring what was admirable and noble in the man, without confessing it, I should be falling into one of those faults against which I continually warn others—the fault of sacrificing truth to the interests of piety, and giving up to the narrowness of a sect that which was meant for the good of mankind.

To those present who are Wesleyans, it is of small importance what I think of Wesley (to Wesley himself it is of *no* importance; he is gone where man's opinion counts for nothing, and where man's praise is not valued);—to Wesleyans, I repeat, it does not matter what others think of Wesley, but to other portions of the Christian Church it is important whether they are honest enough to do a man justice who is not of their sect. Nothing does one's soul so much good as a faithful attempt to do a man credit, and though differing from him, to praise him for what in him is honest, true, and good. Hence in all faithfulness I shall endeavour to point out the excellences of the man. Wesleyans have got Wesley by heart, his sermons and his hymn-book, and they may pardon others if they do not know quite so much of him; and they must not be surprised if I set before others what is quite familiar to Wesleyans. I do not intend to go minutely into Wesley's biography; I shall direct attention more particularly to what sort of a man he was; I shall examine his motives, investigate his principles, and watch his work. Further on, I shall have something to say of Wesleyans, their present position, and future prospects, and I shall have to see how far they are worthy of their founder; whether the children of Wesley are before or behind him—whether they have passed him or come up to him. Therefore, don't let us confuse Wesleyans with Wesley himself, for I never met a Wesleyan yet who said he was up to the mark of the founder of his sect, and if I say anything unpleasant of Wesleyans, it must not be received as necessarily applicable to the great man whose name they bear.

I never can think of Wesley without associating him with the four glorious Johns of whom England ought to be proud—Wycliffe, the Reformer before the Reformation; Milton, the greatest soul England ever knew; Bunyan, the writer of the most blessed book next to the Bible that the world ever delighted in; Locke, who turned a clear understanding, an admirable education, and a pure conscience, to putting that which was before a matter of feeling, on the grounds of philosophy. Then comes Wesley, and I believe, taking him altogether, Wesley was worthy to walk in the company of these four. He had not the genius of Milton, nor the philosophy of Locke, but if to consecrate the energies of a man, as to the carrying out of an object which he

knew to be a true and good one, and that object of the highest character, constitutes genuine greatness, Wesley was as great as any of these four glorious Johns.

I shall consider this evening the nature of the work which Wesley had to do in the world, and the manner in which he was prepared for it. As far as religion was concerned, nothing could be worse than the state of English mind and English life at the period of Wesley's birth. Religion was treated in the higher classes with scepticism, and polished, polite sneering; and some of you would scarcely believe the words with which Butler started his "Analogy" when he wrote, "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment." People, in fact, talked of Christianity as a system that had done its work and was exploded. The state of morality in the *upper* classes was reflected in the works of Shaftesbury, and in the *lower* in the novel of Tom Jones; and there was indeed a need of a new apostle, and a new reform. A combination of circumstances had brought about barbarous ignorance amongst the people, and a sleek, fat, worldly, do-nothingness amongst the clergy. In 1736, every sixth house in London was devoted to the sale of spirits, and in that year five bushels per head of malt were consumed; to swear was to be polite, to curse to be accomplished; to fear God was to be a fool, to believe religion was to be superstitious; to live by it was idiotic, and to die by it was worse still. Manners were vile, base, and debauched; the people never heard sermons, and did not want to. England was a nominally Christian country, and yet I could not point to any age in European history where a nominally Christian country ever has presented a worse picture to the student than did England in 1736. If you want to acquaint yourselves with the immoral condition of the clergy, read Macaulay, and if you want to learn the state of the people, refer to the annals of Wednesbury and Walsall, and see how the enlightened mobs treated Wesley. No words of mine, in fact, could paint the immoral and irreligious condition of the country when Wesley began his great and noble work, but it is easy to perceive that it

required some strong man to drop church patronage, to forswear the easy chair, to throw up books of divinity, and to go barefooted, like a friar of old, through the country to preach the gospel in such a manner as to bring it home to the hearts of mankind, and restore to the people a knowledge of the requirements of a Christian life. What was wanted in those days was a man who should wander through the land, not preaching a *new* doctrine — for the people had no doctrine at all; and if Wesley had gone hair-splitting, or pronounced some new theological views, he never would have touched the consciences of the men he had to deal with, so he very wisely preached the simple gospel of Christ Jesus.

The birth, education, intellect, and training of Wesley were precisely of the character the age most wanted. He was descended from the sturdy nonconformist stock, his grandfather being a clergyman of nonconforming zeal, and one of the 8000 who went to jail in the age of Charles II., because they would not consent to bow down to the very golden calf set up in those days; his father being also a clergyman of nonconforming spirit, and his maternal grandfather a thorough old dissenter. Wesley came of a good stock on both sides. No reform in the Church was ever brought about by one outside the pale of it when he began. Not only was Wesley a churchman at first, but he was an out and out Puseyite; he was a stickler for vestments and white and black gowns—in fact, a regular austere, inflexible High Churchman. But it is curious to note how this remarkable church fossil became enlivened; it is gloriously instructive to look at Wesley in early life, and see him a kind of church petrification, and notice how life crept gradually into limb after limb and into his great heart; how he was compelled by the love of Christ; how, one after the other, he dropt the grave-clothes of ecclesiasticism, and when his Master called him, a loving, hearty, energetic supporter of one system, he left it to found another.

We must now travel on to the little parsonage at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, a place which shone out in those dreary days of irreligion like the light of the Israelitish cottage in the cursed darkness of the land of Egypt. Here dwelt Samuel Wesley, John's father. His mother has been described as "an admirable woman, of highly improved mind, of strong and masculine under-

standing, an obedient wife, an exemplary mother, and a fervent Christian." The family of the old clergyman were brought up in a careful manner, and the first rudiments of instruction instilled into them by their mother.

On the occasion of an incendiary fire which took place at the parsonage, John Wesley was providentially rescued from the flames through the fervent intercession of his father with God, when the father's heart-felt thanksgiving found vent in these words:—"God has given me all my children; let the house go, I am rich enough now." This escape made a deep impression on the youthful mind of Wesley, who, in a portrait painted of him long afterwards, caused to be written under it, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" It naturally made a strong impression upon the heart and soul of the mother of the boy: she gave him to God; she looked upon him entirely as God's. This was one of the circumstances of his life that helped to form his character.

Then he became a scholar in the Charter House. There John suffered, as all boys suffer now in all our large schools, from the tyranny of the older boys. What was given John to eat, the other boys took away. But his father had advised him to walk briskly three times round the garden every morning; and, empty bellied and miserable, he might be seen scudding around three times in accordance with this advice. It was good advice, it prepared him for those walks of his in after life. He had a deal of walking had John. He paved the way in youth, and it gave him his bravery and endurance in after life. He went away to Christ Church. God required a reformer, and John Wesley became a good scholar; for although God might require a lot of cobblers and tailors for His work, an educated man was wanted to begin the movement. It has been ever so. I set aside from this those glorious days when the fishermen were chosen and enlightened with the Holy Ghost; but when the Epistles were to be written, God chose one of the deepest Rabbinical writers, the most finished man of his time. The great Apostle Paul was chosen to be Apostle to the Gentiles. There are people who think ignorance a good thing for a Christian, but they are always persons who are themselves ignorant. John Wesley was a thorough scholar, a profound logician, and deeply versed in the

classics. And although, with an excusable weakness, he had some scruples about his classical knowledge, yet he was one of the most earnest workers for the secular education of this nation that this nation ever had. Some think he was only a preacher, but he
 x made endless books on useful knowledge. Nobody reads them now, because they have done their work; still, there is a barrowful of them, on all secular subjects. John Wesley hated ignorance; he knew that Christianity had nothing to gain from anything that was dark, and so he advocated learning.

At Christ Church he worked very hard, and, as far as man could see, he was to be shut up in Oxford. At this time he was a cheerful man,—cheerful, not jolly. He was a narrow man, a small man beside Martin Luther; a shaving beside the large deep heart of the German. John Wesley was of a serene temper; but he never knew the depths of mirth nor the depths of grief: he had scruples about smiling, and compunctions about laughter. He had some scruples about taking orders, not as to the rites of the orders, but as to his fitness for taking them; he approached them slowly and reverentially, and did what he usually did in other things—sought counsel at the parsonage at Epworth.

At this time of his life he got hold of two books that, with the exception of the Bible, did most to make or mar him. He got hold of “*De Imitatione Christi*,” an excellently written and glorious book, but a book with marvellous powers of mischief. It was a book that preached all through it such an abstinence from the duties of life, that if it were true the Gospel must be false, and John the Baptist was a greater man than His master. It was a book for the guidance of the monk, the anchorite, and the hermit, and was never intended for men like ourselves; it set an example impossible to follow. There are many books like it. Doddridge’s “*Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*” is like it—a glorious book, but a mischievous one. When you get to the end of the chapter, you feel you are unworthy to say the prayer there; and you cannot do it. John Wesley got hold of the “*De Imitatione*,” but he had a deal of sense; he did not think he ought to believe it all,—what was the use of telling a man that he must mix with none but religious people, indeed?—but he felt he was bound to imitate the pattern. He became an ascetic; he had been ascetic at the Charter House from necessity;

he now became ascetic from choice. There is a time in every man's life when he is sure to become ascetic if he is religious; the problem is how to be in the world and not of the world, not how to keep apart from the world altogether. Some people seem to think that you should know a religious man by some distinctive mark, as you would know a sheep by the mark on its wool. The Quaker sets up his broad brim; another thinks to be saved by starving; but the Gospel does not teach us to break the vessel in order that it may hold the divine liquor. John Wesley, however, thought so; he was in earnest about the good he got from the "De Imitatione," and it led him for a while into what I can call nothing else but the Gospel of Starvation. Indeed, he left it behind him; for the early Conferences solemnly discussed whether egg-and-wine was not spiritually dangerous. Then there was another terrible question discussed by those Conferences, about ruffles: if a woman indulged in the worldliness of lace, she was not to be simply "admonished," but "dealt with" by the ecclesiastical law. Breadth of brims, squareness of toes, absence of curls, egg-flip discarded; this was religion. John Calvin legislated on curls; fancy him sending a bride to prison for being married in curls, and sending the bride's maids there, too, for being accessories before the fact! Wesleyanism has dropt off these things now, they will not stick to it; they stick to Romanism still, and they will not drop off it. They never dropt off Wesley, because he had a love of them. He got to starvation point, and then he found it damaged his health, although no doubt it blest his soul.

And then he got hold of the second book—the noble record of "Holy Living and Dying" of Jeremy Taylor, the poet of the pulpit, which did a more kindly office for Wesley than "De Imitatione." He then began to keep one of the most wonderful diaries now in existence. The brother Charles I shall have to say something about by-and-bye. I admire John, but love Charles best; John was the king, but Charles was "the sweet singer of Israel." We know no hymns like some of those of Charles Wesley; but you are not to suppose that I agree with all the theology. There was a club at Oxford where these men strictly spent their leisure, and became prayerful and ascetic to a fault. They fell into an error; for they tried to awe their souls into method, and got a great

many ugly nicknames for their pains. This made them the more earnest; for they were like all Englishmen—they loved to go out on a stormy day and battle with the elements, when those who had “the pips” were stopping at home.

One word on Wesley’s mission to Georgia, and his luckless love affair there. On John’s rejection by his fair Sophia, he simply made a note in his diary, and by-and-bye heartily thanked God for his deliverance. Miss Sophia married someone else, and then some parts of her behaviour not pleasing him, he excommunicated her. He became embroiled in a law-suit in consequence, and ended it by returning to England.

It is a singular fact in history, that the same day that John Wesley returned home, George Whitfield was to leave it for America. He had just time to stop Whitfield’s departure, and he adopted the most extraordinary method of determining whether or not he should go—he actually drew a lot for it. There was never a man more credulous than John Wesley. With an intellect clear and piercing, a power of reasoning not of a low order, logical to the greatest extent, and with a scholastic knowledge the most wonderful, yet he was so credulous. The house at home was haunted by “old Jeffrey,” who rung bells, shook the floors, and rattled the doors; this was the secret of Wesley’s credulity. You could never tell a story too long for him: a camel of a story was one he loved, he could not endure a gnat. He used to settle all difficult points by letting the Bible fall open, and choosing the top text, and, like little children when they cast lots, if that did not suit he would let it fall open again. He drew his lot; but Whitfield went to America notwithstanding that John Wesley’s lot had decided he should not.

Wesley had come home, and then he declared that in a certain place, in a certain house, in a certain room, at a quarter-past nine—he was exact to the minute—he was converted. That doctrine of instantaneous conversion is a difficult one to understand. Many persons say it was not so; that John Wesley was converted long before. But John Wesley says it was so, and he ought to know best. It all depends on the definition of the word “conversion.” John Wesley tells us that in that little room in Aldersgate Street, on the 29th of May, in the year 1739, he was converted, and, more than that, he declared that he never was

converted before. "But," say some biographers, "that is a mistake." Well, well; who ought to be the best judge of the matter—John Wesley, or Robert Southey? It is like all other controversies; the terms are not defined before the argument proceeds. Ask John Wesley what he means by conversion; then ask Robert Southey what *he* means, and the difference of opinion will be at once set right. What John Wesley meant is pretty clear from what he has said about it: his idea of conversion seems to be that it is an inward, clear consciousness of grace before God, accompanied by an inward heavenly peace arising in the soul. In a letter to a friend, Wesley said that before his conversion he had only the faith of a devil, the faith of a Judas Iscariot—that speculative notional shadow which lives in the head and not in the heart. John Wesley's notions of religion, previously to this 29th of May, were purely of an ethical kind. He had struggled with it, had subjected himself to it, he only knew it as a law, and perhaps he did not love it sometimes; but in that chamber in Aldersgate Street it came to him differently; it there sprang up in his heart as a deep inward love between himself and God. Therefore it is easy to understand what John meant when he said he was converted there; he meant that before then he had been a mere Christian legalist, but that at that time he first felt religion as a law of love. Is there no *difference* between serving God as a servant, and serving him as a lover or a friend? and is there no *meaning* in the words, "I call you no more servants, but friends"? Is there no difference between doing a thing, not because we love it, but because it is the law, and doing it because it comes natural to us? Oh, yes, John Wesley, who had known Christianity as a law and then as a life, contrasted the dreary bondage of the one, with the deep, joyous, enthusiastic love of the other, and well did he say, "I was converted in Aldersgate."

The next thing to be remembered, after John Wesley's conversion, is his visit to the Moravians in Germany. I am sorry I have not time to sketch the Moravians. They are a very noble people, with very queer laws; I would not like to join them, because they would undertake to regulate my little life a little too much to please me. Moravianism has no more chance of being universal in England than Wesleyanism has; I, for one, shall never go to a band-meeting or a love-feast; nor shall I tell my

“experiences” to anybody, because I like to keep them to myself. Well, John Wesley went and spent a fortnight in Germany, and there he met with that old theological curiosity, Zinzendorff.* They had some discussions together, and by-and-bye they took to quarrelling. This is to be remembered.

Then I am also sorry that I have not time to sketch the life of that memorable man Whitfield, the first of those rigid old churchmen of that day to preach out of doors. Now, it is not uncommon to preach out of doors; but then, aye, it was a different thing altogether. Why, John Wesley himself said he at one time of his life almost thought it a sin to save a man out of church. It was nothing but the grand compulsion—“*Necessity* is laid upon me that I preach the Gospel”—that could have carried Whitfield out of doors to preach. Well, he went down to Bristol and preached to the Kingswood colliers, who, not the most polished specimens of humanity now, were very rough then. But Whitfield did not care for that; he went down to polish them, and they listened to him, because he came to do them good. It was something new to them. Their employers then, as they do now, used them only for their own gain; they let the colliers make them rich, they paid their wages grudgingly, and then would even steal after them with that mean trick of *truck*. There are few days more noble to Englishmen, who have sense, than that memorable 17th of February 1739, that day of days when the giant Whitfield broke the cruel bondage that ecclesiastical Delilahs had enmeshed him in, and strode forth a Samson to preach the Gospel to those poor blackfaced and neglected colliers down at Kingswood. And yet he apologised for it. He said, with that simplicity of his, “I was long in making up my mind, but I thought it might be doing the service of my Saviour, who had a mountain for His pulpit and the heavens for His sounding board, and who, when His Gospel was refused by the Jews, sent His servants unto the Gentiles.” “Let a little water out, and there will soon be room for more.”

We have seen Wesley a right order-loving Christian, with Dissenting blood in him, a High Churchman, a rigid stickler for

* Nicholas Louis, Count von Zinzendorff, a Saxon nobleman, who rendered himself remarkable as the founder, or rather reviver, of the religious society commonly called in England Moravians, upon the European continent Herrnhuters, and by themselves the United Brethren.

ecclesiastical discipline; we have to see all his rigidity give way, like the Judaism of St Paul, to a greater and a better light; and to do that we must see what was the training of the man. Was it ambition that caused him to change? That will never do. There was but one thing he feared, and that was the wrath of God. There was but one thing he yielded to, and that was his overwhelming sense of the necessity that was laid upon him to preach Christ everywhere he could. That is the burden of his teaching, the great lesson of his life.

In the course of time Wesley must go down to Bristol too. The foundations of Methodism were laid there. Well, to his infinite honour, he went out to preach, and then came those paroxysms of madness, roaring, howling, writhing, falling on the ground, fainting, shouting, and bawling, all for the glory of God. It need not be explained, for they are at it again in Belfast* and other places, and the same words are used to express it now as were used in Wesley's days. I have looked with astonishment at what some of my brother clergymen—if they will allow me to use the phrase—have said and done on this matter. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and as I have the reputation of a fool, I shall take the liberty of saying a few words on the subject. I will therefore assert broadly that all that happened when Wesley preached, and all that is happening in Belfast and other places now, has no necessary connection with the preaching of Methodism. You doubt it? You shall fill me any room you like with any average men and women, and I will undertake to have half of them fainting and the other half weeping at any given time. You fill me your Town Hall, and at a certain time I will have every man there on his legs shouting and howling and roaring. What! do you think we are dunces enough to believe that such things are necessary to the preaching of *religion*? I say that nothing that happened in John Wesley's days, and is now happening at Belfast, but happened to the Christians in the old Roman Catholic days, and then the bigots howled it down as gross fanaticism and superstition. But where is the sense of hounding down the strugglings and the strivings of some good old Catholic saint, and crying up the same thing when it occurs in the Protestant, or what is called the Evangelical Church? I believe that these

* A. D. 1859.

paroxysms are facts, that they do occur, and I believe that some of them are genuine and some are nothing but fraud. John Wesley believed the same. You need not fear; I intend saying nothing about John Wesley that cannot be found in his "Journal." You must remember that, late in life, John Wesley neither expected nor encouraged these paroxysms: that Charles Wesley was always shy of them; and that they never occurred during the preaching of George Whitfield, who was the more fiery preacher. Charles and John said they would put it down; let those who dare, read the "Journal" after that had taken place. John said to a woman, who was "distressing herself and crying" by his side, "I shan't think any better of you for that," and then "she mended." Then read this noble passage. "To-day one came, who was pleased to fall into a fit for my entertainment. He beat himself heartily. I thought it a pity to hinder him. So, instead of singing over him, as I often had before, I had him placed outside to recover at his leisure." Again. "A girl, as she began to cry, I ordered to be carried out. Her convulsions were so violent as to deprive her of the use of her limbs till they laid her outside the door, and then she unexpectedly found her legs and walked off." Well, then:—"Some very *unstill* sisters, who always took care to stand near me, and tried who could cry loudest, since I have had them removed out of my sight, have been as quiet as lambs." One more specimen. "The first night I preached here, half my words were lost through the noise and outcries. Therefore I gave out public notice that whosoever cried out so as to drown my voice should, without hurting them, be gently carried to the furthest corner of the room; but my porter had no employment that night." Then, if Charles and John Wesley found out that these paroxysms were under the control of the will, am I to be blamed because I think that there is no ground for supposing that these physiological and psychological phenomena under the control of the will have nothing more to do with Christianity than with preaching Mohamedanism?

The next point, then, is the separation of John Wesley from the Moravians. It is easy to account for the separation of Zinzendorff and John Wesley; they could not both be kings. There are fundamental differences between the Moravians and the Wesleyans. The Moravians hold that "all prayer, all Bible

reading, all benevolent acts prior to regeneration (*i.e.*, the sudden turning point), are deadly poison." That Wesley could not hold. He held that "Evangelical perfection is possessed by the regenerate as a moral condition wherein even all the irregular motions of concupiscence, every involuntary impulse of sensuality are unknown." The Moravians could not hold that. Well, both sides appealed to their own experience instead of to reason, and as a natural result the breach widened. they took strong views of one another's doctrine, and spoke sharp words about each other.

The next thing in Wesley's life was his separation from Whitfield. George Whitfield held the doctrine of election and irreversible decrees, and was also opposed to the "perfection" doctrine. John put this Calvinistic doctrine about as shortly and as cleverly, to answer his own purpose, as ever it has been put yet. He says, "Supposing one in twenty of mankind are elected, then nineteen out of twenty are reprobated; the elect shall be saved do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned do what they can." It is very strong, and very, very plain indeed. The quarrel grew bitter, and Whitfield let out that curious fact that Wesley had cast a lot to see if he (Whitfield) was to go to America, and that God had given him the wrong lot. This stung Wesley to the quick; he said it was, what it really was, a violation of true friendship; and the bitterness of the quarrel increased.

In these times men are getting moderate; but in old times, when theologians spoke about matters of doctrine, there were some noises. I will just give you a specimen or two of "Theological Billingsgate"—a description of Calvinism by an Arminian, and a description of Arminianism by a Calvinist—choice specimens in their way. Here is one extracted from the very curious poem, Dr Beaumont's "Psyche."

"Oh, no! may those black mouths for ever be
 Damm'd up with silence and with shame, which dare
 Father the foulest, deepest tyranny
 On Love's great God: and needs will make it clear
 From his own Word! thus rendering Him at once
 Both Cruelty's and Contradiction's prince.

“ A prince whose mocking Law forbids, what yet
 Is his eternally resolvèd will :
 Who woos and tantalizes souls to get
 Up into heaven, yet destines them to hell ;
 Who calls them forth whom he keeps lockèd in ;
 Who damns the sinner, yet ordains the sin.” (Canto x. 71).

This was the Arminian view of Calvinism. For the other side there were richer flowers in store :—“ Scarce had our first parents made their appearance when Satan, the first Arminian, began to preach the pernicious doctrine of free will to them, which so pleased the old gentleman and his lady that they (like thousands of their foolish offspring in our day) adhered to the deceitful news, embraced it cordially, disobeyed the command of their Maker, and by so doing launched their whole posterity into a cloud of miseries and ills. But some, perhaps, will be ready to say that Arminianism, though an error, cannot be the root of all other errors,—to which I answer, that, if it first originated with Satan, then, I ask, from whence springs every error or evil in the world? Surely, Satan must be the first moving cause of all evils that ever did, do now, or ever will make their appearance in this world; consequently he was the first propagator of the cursed doctrine above mentioned. Hence [the logic is lovely] Arminianism begat Popery, Popery begat Methodism, Methodism begat Moderate Calvinism, Moderate Calvinism begat Baxterianism, Baxterianism begat Unitarianism, Unitarianism begat Arianism, Arianism begat Universalism, Universalism begat Deism, and Deism begat Atheism.” The tirade concludes by averring that of all these “isms” Arminianism is the worst, and that the whole will end in “destructionism.” Where do you think I got that from? Not from an infidel paper. No, I always go to a religious paper for abuse. Well, then, it is an extract from the *Gospel Magazine*.

Then, out of the two sides, as it always does occur in a quarrel between two sects, there arose another—Antinomianism.

The next thing that comes under our notice is the gradual systematising of Methodism. The first step was out-of-door preaching by John Wesley; by-and-by the clergy would not let him preach indoors, because he preached so enthusiastically and awoke the pew-sleepers, this led to field preaching: but then there were wet days, and they must have a meeting house; but then a

bricklayer would not build them one for the love of God, and so there must be funds; and then, who would take care of the funds? they must have stewards. Then they got their meeting-houses, and wanted preachers—lay preachers. John Wesley kicked against that a long time, but was at last convinced. Well, then, having got the preachers, they must have something to pay them with; and so came the “penny-a-week” fund, that marvel of organisation, that secret of the strength of Wesleyanism. The sooner the advocates of the voluntary principle come to that penny-a-week, the better it will be for them. Lay preaching was a novelty then. Fox certainly had gone up and down and preached Quakerism in spite of all the horse-ponds in the country, but that was before Quakerism settled down into broadcloth and easy-going. But lay-preaching was again cultivated under Wesley, and the Methodists gradually became formed into a society. It had a noble title and a noble preamble, and a set of common-sense rules, but it was not called a church, it was a society.

And now the mob began their insane roar against Methodism, the same as they did in Jerusalem when Christ came. The early Wesleyans knew almost all the horse-ponds in the country; whenever eggs were more ancient than usual they were reserved for Wesleyans—in short, they were ill-treated everywhere; and if anyone wants to read of the heroism of all heroism, it must be found in the annals of the early Quakers and the early Wesleyans. Time would fail me to tell of John Wesley’s travels, his rough usage and hard fare, his rencontre with Beau Nash, and his exploits at Wednesbury and Walsall. He always turned his attention to the poor in preference to the wealthy, and was ever ready to do all in his power for their service. His courage was indomitable; his perseverance and earnestness were marvellous.

I must just allude to the establishment of Kingswood School. It was just such an extraordinary institution for the instruction of the young, as anyone would naturally expect from a man who knew nothing about either women or children. One of the rules of the school provided that the children should never have a day’s holiday from the time they entered till the time they left; another, that they were to rise at four and spend an hour in self-examination; another, that they were only to have meat twice a week; and so on.

In the year 1744 a conference was formed for drawing up the doctrines of Wesleyanism, and the society went fully afloat.

And now I come to the point where I hope to fairly lay hands on John Wesley, and that is in reference to the large-hearted charity of the man. He never shut a Catholic out of heaven. He acknowledged, after reading of the death of some Trappist monks, that, "notwithstanding they had a great deal of superstition, a strong vein of piety ran through their works." He held Montaigne to be right in many things, said a good word for Servetus, and even went so far as to publish the life of Thomas Firmin, the Unitarian. No doubt Wesleyans now would call these his "weaknesses," but they were the opinions of his mature life, glorious opinions too. Why, he made no doubt, he said, but Marcus Antoninus was one of those who should come from the East and from the West to sit down with Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom. Wesley was no bitter Protestant bigot; he believed that if a man loved God with all his heart he would be saved, differences of opinion notwithstanding.

Wesley had remarkable power over both his preachers and his people,—a power not sought, but laid at his feet. He was a king, who held his kingship to the last, and then bequeathed a republican constitution to his people. He had a deal of shrewd policy had John. He knew his preachers well; he knew that they had not much to say, that their little pump would soon be dry, so he moved them up and down, and thus made their little story always fresh.

I like John's lectures about singing, and would advise Wesleyans to read Wesley on singing. He was very strong about singing lines over and over again, and could not endure *fugues*.

Wesleyanism did not go into Scotland; but there is no time to give the reason. It went into Ireland, and some curious advice John had to write to his people there about cleanliness; he even advised the use of brimstone in families as a destructive agent. He told them, too, to mend their clothes, or he would never expect them to mend their lives.

Wesley's marriage was most unhappy, and at last came separation, and Wesley made in his journal this laconic entry: "*Non eam relinque; non dimisi; non revocabo.*" "I did not leave her; I did not dismiss her; and I shan't fetch her back."

Thus ends the eventful history of John Wesley. He never missed a night's sleep; he was regular in his habits; and with his hair silver white, his face rosy with health, his great charitable soul peeping out of his eyes, he went down to the grave at a good old age, long past the three score and ten years allotted to man, and far into the four score years which were to bring trouble and sorrow; and, with a fine emotion, the minister who buried him, by a slight change in the service, spoke of "their dear *father* now departed" instead of "their dear brother," for he was their father ever.

One thing has been forgotten. While Voltaire and Rousseau were inflaming the revolutionary spirits of France with their writings, John Wesley and Whitfield were doing their mighty work in England, and there are few men to whom England owes more for her steadfastness than these two. Wesley was therefore a patriot as well as a priest.

What I have to say of Wesley's hymns must go till another opportunity, for time is short.

I intend now to see what was the work the followers of Wesley undertook to do, whether that work is done, and to enter into a little speculation as to whether they are to increase, or whether they are to have to say, "Let now thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." You must remember that the falling off of a society is as likely to happen because its work is well done as because its work is not well done. If each sect that comes into the world to urge forward some forgotten side of the truth does its work, it soon becomes absorbed by the large bodies, and we may have to receive at some future time some new Wesley to preach Wesleyanism to Wesleyans.

I do not think modern Wesleyanism is better than its founder, and my honest opinion is that it is not up to the mark. I do not think it is adapted to be a permanent institution; its discipline is too sharp for some of us, too strict, too severe. All religious forms have a danger somewhere, and Wesleyanism has its danger; it is to be apprehended in the exaggerated importance it attaches to what are technically called "experiences," thus drawing off attention from that great matter which absolutely must be insisted upon—good works. The Romish Church has a tendency to ceremonialism, and the Wesleyans have a tendency not a whit better.

As to its increase, I suppose it is always increasing. It has had some splits, and will go on splitting. I feel certain I shall live long enough to see another split. A sect cannot be got that will not split; it would be sure to contain some men who were born to be governed by the Church, and some who were born to be independent. If I were one of the former, I should not be able to think that a bishop multiplied by a hundred (for that is what the Conference is, after all) was better than a single bishop, and, as I should like to look up to the man who governed me, and feel that I was governed by a great man, I should go over to be governed by one bishop. And then the independent men would go over to the Independents. There must be splits. I do not know much about Wesleyans myself, but my soul goes out towards those Primitives. I find them with some fine old stuff in them yet, and I often see them standing on the top of a waggon preaching away. I don't know what John would say to a Primitive, though; but at the same time I am quite sure what John would say to the Wesleyan chapels now-a-days, with their Gothic windows and their spires and their turrets. The Primitive is certainly a sort of pioneer, although his grammar is a little curious sometimes, and no doubt he is doing a good work. Modern Wesleyanism is, however, doomed to the fate of all other *isms*. There will be a man rise out of its bosom to reform it—to re-Wesleyanise Wesleyanism. But beyond that I will say that, as in the beginning, so now, they are famous for preaching the first principles of Christian faith, and that the more they continue to do that, the more will they uphold their glory and honour. As I have said before, a large number must go to the Church, and a large number the other way; but the follower of Wesley must go straight on in his way. As soon as ever they fall into the evil of preferring the means to the end, on that day will be written across Wesleyanism, "Ichabod," the glory hath departed. My object this evening has been to bring Wesley out of the little chapels where he has been shut up, and to expose him in the market-place of Old England, so that all who pass by may give him honour and if I have not succeeded in making you love Wesley, and admire Wesley more than you have ever done before, I have done my work clumsily.

LIFE OF DR PRIESTLEY.

BORN 1733. DIED 1804. (FROM 6TH GEORGE II. TO 44TH GEORGE III.)

IT has never been permitted to this town of Birmingham to have great men born in it, but great men have been resident in it, and by their discoveries have added lustre to it. Not that the town knows very much about them, or cares very much. In the case of Watt, probably the town does; but in the case of Priestley, it requires a great deal for a man to admire him. It requires a man set free from antiquated theological prejudices; able to understand that science is not limited by anything which has gone before it, except its own data; a man free from a passion for throwing stones, for calling men heretics, for meddling with other people's damnation,—and even yet this town, in common with other towns, is far from being free from this evil spirit. It is not so long since Birmingham was disgraced by some pettifogging riots and theological and religious disorders (the hero of them is recently dead);* and if you look carefully you will see that the number of men thoroughly free from the bigotry of theologians is small. Even yet many scientific men treat Priestley in the same manner as he was treated in his lifetime by the Fellows of the Royal Society in London. He says that after the riots they treated him coldly, and proclaimed him Athiest, Theist, Unitarian; all of which, in the conception of a fool and a bigot, a man can be at one time.

* “On the 16th and 17th of July 1867, occurred the last of that long series of riots which have rendered the town of Birmingham somewhat infamous in that respect. It originated in the weakness of the chief magistrate of the town in refusing to grant the use of the Town Hall for the purpose of a series of Anti-Papal Lectures by the late Mr William Murphy, and thus tacitly giving the rough element in the town to understand that Mr Murphy was not to be protected from any attacks which might be made upon him, by such of the said roughs as might feel themselves aggrieved by the—certainly intemperate—language of the lecturer.”—*Old and New Birmingham: A history of the town and its people.* By Robert K. Dent.

Priestley's life, I am sorry to say, is not familiar, except to members of the sect of which he was one of the chief fathers and chief glories. It is so many years since he died, that it is not to be wondered at that most people's portrait of him is dim. He never was a man calculated to excite enthusiasm or passion. He knew very little of the human heart, or the inner things of human nature. He did not meddle with the deep things of life, and, therefore, he was not a man who very easily fascinated, or a man very easily remembered.

He was the son of Jonas Priestley, and was born on the 13th of March 1733, at Birstal, near Leeds. His mother seems to have been an excellent woman; rather prim, if one of the stories told about her is to be believed. She saw her son, then a child, playing with a pin, and asked him where he had got it. The lad replied that he had been playing with his cousins, and acknowledged that he had brought the pin away with him. She made him take it back. This shows a nice sense of property and propriety, and, to a man like me, a prime sense of forgetfulness that in such extreme righteousness the fine lines of conscience are apt to be effaced. When Priestley's mother died, he came under the care of a very excellent woman—an aunt. She was Calvinistical, but was far from confining salvation to those who thought as she did. Being in good circumstances, her home was the resort of all the dissenting ministers in the neighbourhood, and those obnoxious from heresy she welcomed as much as the others, if she thought them honest, good, and sincere. *There's a Calvinist!* actually admitting the right of other people to be saved although they were heretical, and actually believing that men could be honest and good though they were unsigned.

Priestley went to the Free Grammar School, and there learnt Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and in the vacations he learnt Chaldec, Syriac, and Arabic. His dear aunt thought he should be a minister, but his health being feeble, he turned to mercantile pursuits. He got better in health, however, and at the age of nineteen he went to one of the somewhat humble academies in which Dissenters at that time placed their students—he went to Daventry. The master was a Mr Ashworth, and he was the successor of Dr Doddridge. The soundness of Dr Doddridge has been questioned, and he certainly did take a method with young

men, perhaps inadvisable, if you are afraid where your investigations may lead you to; he always required a student to read the best books on both sides of a controverted question, and to make an abridgement of both. This is monstrous; for if a man reads both sides of a controverted question, the chances are that there will be no controverted questions; so that Dr Doddridge's system was, of course, founded on fundamental mistake. But it led to enlarged views on both sides. Priestley had an original faculty for heresy; he soon admitted that he came to take a heterodox view of almost every question. He dropped his orthodox views slowly, as men usually do; for the rejection of a system of theology is never systematic. You loosen one stone, and cling very lovingly to the next; you give up one thing, and take your stand upon another. Thus, a man who has ceased to be a Calvinist, and has gone over to the Arminians, takes his stand upon the Trinity, is sound upon the Atonement.

Priestley wished, by-and-bye, to become a communicant of a Calvinistic congregation; he wished to eat of the supper of Christ's blood, but he was refused, because he doubted, or rather, as they said in those days, because he "entertained doubts." I have been told to entertain strangers, that thereby I may perhaps entertain angels unawares; but entertaining a doubt! who ever found one entertaining, and what wise man would ever entertain one? Well, he "entertained doubts" as to the liability of the whole human race to the wrath of God and the pains of hell, on account of "the sin of our first parents," and because a young man entertains doubts upon this deep question, upon which nobody knows anything particular, it is determined that he is not a fit person to be a communicant. So you see what comes of entertaining a doubt. At the Academy divisions were frequent, because discussions were numerous, and I need hardly tell you that wherever men can divide, divide they will; wherever they can differ, differ they must. It has been so from the beginning, and it will be so to the end of the chapter. These men, then, eager, full of texts, rushed to battle over the question of liberty and necessity; they debated questions upon which they had not over-much evidence, and, as they knew nothing about the next world, they were argumentative, contentious, and lucid upon what happens to us after death.

By-and-bye Joseph Priestley quitted that humble academy, and went as minister to Needham Market (how suggestive the name is of the place!), and there he got into a sort of nebulous Arianism; he got the reputation of not being exactly sound. They gave him £30 a year. But his people had a great idea of getting a minister up to the mark! They did not want a teacher (what congregation does?); they wanted an ardent advocate of their own opinions, who would illuminate, illustrate, enforce, and ornament them, and at the same time show what an enlightened congregation it was which held such views, and could secure such an expounder. For £30 this congregation expected too much, and Priestley left them with a great deal of thankfulness, for they were over hard upon him.

Then at Nantwich he opened a school, and got on; rigid economy, no debts, for Priestley never was in debt throughout his life, and he hated debt with the holy horror with which every honest man should hate it. Rigid economy got him an air-pump; rigid economy bought him an electrical machine. How characteristic! This man half starved himself to buy an air-pump, and was sternly self-denying to purchase an electrical machine.

Then he was married to a Miss Wilkinson. I have looked among his works, and have been unable to discover a treatise on marriage; but, no doubt, he wrote a preliminary treatise on the married state. He went about his marriage in a highly philosophic and systematic manner, and, no doubt, reduced the matter to philosophic principles before he put it into marital practice.

He visited London, and to him it was always a delight to go to London. He took a month there whenever he could, because it meant to him new books, new subjects, new faces, new discussions. There, in 1766, he met Dr Franklin and Dr Price (and *there* were three clear, clever, intelligent-minded men, whose duty it was to brush away cob-webs, and to let in light). Of course he took at once to Franklin and at once to Price ("birds of a feather flock together"), and he told Franklin that, if he could get the necessary books together, he should write a history of electrical discovery. Give Priestley the books, and he could write on anything. He had a clear, ready, apprehensive mind, a pen too facile, and these betrayed him into writing more than anybody would ever read.

Meantime in theological matters, doctrine after doctrine had slid away, and then the Atonement. "Men talk," he said, "of the sacred doctrine of Remission; but it shows that the death of Christ is no proper sacrifice or satisfaction for sin. The pardon is dispensed solely on account of the personal repentance of the sinners." This was looked upon as very shocking. He left Nantwich and went to Warrington, where he succeeded Dr Aikin, and was Professor of Languages and Belles Lettres in the Dissenting Academy; but, by-and-bye, the trustees and the professors fell out, and in 1767 he left Warrington, and went to the Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds. His house was near to a brewery, and, whether it was the smell of the wort, or the smell of the brewery chimney, it set him thinking about chemistry, and he was soon found impregnating water with "fixed air."

Then in 1771 he was made an offer to go with Captain Cook on his second voyage to the Southern Seas, and the matter was nearly settled, when a difficulty came in the way. It was intimated to him by Mr, afterwards Sir Joseph, Banks, that "objections to his religious principles had been successfully urged by some of the ecclesiastical members of the Board of Longitude." Did anyone ever read anything more utterly ridiculous than this statement? What had ecclesiastical principles to do with the Board of Longitude? If it had been a matter of *latitude*, the case might have been different! Poor Priestley—unsound on the Atonement, and, therefore, not sufficiently sound to accompany Captain Cook, and to take an observation of a planet, or to make an experiment at sea! And simply because he was an Arian! Such superstitions as these take longer to weed out of people's minds than any other.*

In 1772, Priestley was appointed librarian and literary companion to the Earl Shelburne; salary, £250 a year, with separate residence, and a provision for life if the persons did not disagree, and if the Earl did not die first. In the second year of the engagement, Priestley travelled Germany, France, and Holland.

* "They objected to Priestley 'on account of his religious principles,' and appointed the two Forsters, whose 'religious principles,' if they had been known to these well-meaning but not far-sighted persons, would probably have surprised them."—*Professor Huxley's Address at the unveiling of the Priestley statue in Birmingham.*

At Paris he was received with respect and honour by the great chemists. There he said they were all Atheists, and they pitied him. In England he was not thought fit to go with Captain Cook; in France he was so little heretical that he was pitied; he never could get right.

Moved by the French pity he wrote what, after all, was one of his best books, "Letters to a Philosophic Unbeliever." These letters are the letters of a Theist, of a Christian Theist, and of a philosophic man, arguing the question of Revealed against Natural Religion. This is a book which leaves Priestley high and dry among his followers. He was the father of the Unitarian Church. There are people now in the sect who care not for the traditions of their fathers; they have got so far that they believe Priestley has become old-fashioned, sound, orthodox, antiquated, fogeyish, as compared with their advanced ideas. The questions Priestley discussed are done with, and new questions have arisen. The question now is, which shall get out of the road, Scripture or Science; and, if the Scriptures differ with Science, which pitcher, in going down the stream, shall break. But these questions were not Priestley's questions, and we have no right to ask them of him in his books. He went on with his chemical researches, aided by Lord Shelburne. He declared man, on scientific grounds, to be simply material. Therefore, he was a "Materialist." Fearful name? He also held that immortality depended upon the Christian resurrection of man as material—solely, wholly, simply material—but that he still might become immortal by the fiat of God. Many men have since gone beyond this, but this was his position. Some people nowadays would rather not rise, than feel that they haven't got a soul in the meantime.

He parted with Earl Shelburne, and, after spending a little time in London, he came to Birmingham. Many here have, no doubt, sat in the shrine once sacred to his memory; but some have sold the shrine, and have given to the priests the things which once were Priestley's.* No doubt they are right; because what are

* "In 1862 the Roman Catholics purchased from the Unitarians the building long known as the New Meeting House, the successor of that in which Dr Priestley preached from 1780 to 1791, and which was burnt by the rioters in the latter year. It is now known as St Michael's, and during the year 1878 a red brick manse was erected in front, thus obscuring the view of this historic edifice."—*Old and New Birmingham*, by Robert K. Dent.

traditions, and what are antiquities to a people so enlightened as you and I? They are merely clinging superstitions. And so the old place is sold, and Priestley's haunts are now trodden by the feet of those against whom he was one of the most earnest fighters, and one of the deadliest foes.

A subscription was entered into to help him in his experiments; an offer was made to try to obtain him a pension, but he declined. Then he wrote a "History of the Corruptions of Christianity," a book which was worthy any wise man's reading; but it had the honour of being burnt at Dort by the common hangman. Burning books is the finest system of propagandism known.

Then he was engaged in a literary warfare with Dr Horsley. Priestley was an affectionate, quiet, methodical, and apparently cold man; but he could get warm, and when, in that controversy, he stood hammer in hand and dealt blow for blow with his opponent, he hit hard; and he had the best of it in argument, although Horsley was more courteous. He addressed some familiar letters to the people of Birmingham, the irony of which was delicate and fine. The people of Birmingham did not like them; people seldom like irony, except at the expense of their neighbours, and so the people of Birmingham were exasperated. Then Priestley replied to that splendid man, Burke, and though Burke beat Priestley in eloquence, Priestley had the best of it in argument; for when Burke had made a charge against him, which he would neither substantiate nor retract, Priestley said that he had not the ability to prove it, nor the honesty to withdraw it.

On the 14th of July 1791, that outbreak of humanity—splendid, fearful, necessary, terrible, salutary—the French Revolution, was to be celebrated in Birmingham. The Bastille had fallen (two years before); there was a chance for humanity; the down-trodden peoples had an opportunity of regaining their liberty, and there was to be a dinner in Birmingham in honour of the event. Now come the famous riots with which you are all familiar. There was a mob, with the usual characteristics of a mob—hysterics, strong passions, small thought, abundance of noise. Every intellectual man must despise a mob. It is a curious thing that the mob now does not take the same side. Do

you think the mob knows more about it now? No, they have merely an idea that the upper classes are not on their side, and so they bellow against them. But in those days, the lower and the upper classes joined, and the educated rowdy led on the uneducated blackguard, and used their vilest passions and their filthiest senses to inflict political chastisement upon a few enlightened men who loved their country as dearly as *they* did, and who would love its institutions and constitution *as long* as they did. Whenever I hear of aristocratic people seeking to league with the democracy I am suspicious, and think that the former only leagues with the latter in order that they may make them do some dirty work which they are not too wise or too scrupulous, but too finical, to do themselves. The singular thing was, that when the gentlemen, the magistrates, the Church-and-King men, had hounded on the people, they tried to call them back when it was too late, by saying, "Consider what a great deal of money it will cost." But why should Priestley be attacked? Because of his writings, and because he was talked of as a chief preacher of heresy. This is what was said of him in an address to the Unitarians, published at that time:—"Dr Priestley at present, seems a chaos in miniature; not worth God's notice; has neither belief nor understanding given him. For a careful analysis proves his spirit of the order of rebelling angels, his principles frothy and fiery, like fixed and inflammable air mixed with gunpowder, his body *terra damnata*, and the whole compound a devil incarnate. I hope Dissenters will beware of his seduction, and take heed lest they are deceived through philosophy." That must have been written by a drunken chemist; it was, moreover, just the sort of stuff the mob liked—it was thoroughly unintelligible. Take another specimen from a song entitled "Old Mother Church," describing the Dissenters:—

"Sedition is their creed;
 Feign'd sheep, but wolves indeed—
 How can we trust?
 Gunpowder Priestley would
 Deluge the Throne with blood,
 And lay the great and good
 Low in the dust.

Hist'ry thy page unfold,
Did not their sires of old
Murder their king?
And they would overthrow
King, lords, and bishops too ;
And, while they gave the blow,
Loyally sing—

O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter our enemies,
And make them fall."

Priestley was not at the dinner, though some still say he was ; toasts and sentiments were given, and the newspapers afterwards said the toasts drunk were "something awful." Afterwards the house of the heretic Priestley was attacked ; his books were destroyed ; torn MSS. covered the ground. And then the mob went on. House after house was destroyed—the houses of those whose names had never been famous in the town save for good deeds and good sense. The justest, clearest-headed, simplest, and truest men were the victims. The mob had a fine sense of oppositeness ; it knew its antipodes, like the dirty man who selected the cleanest he could find to kick. Of course poor Priestley had to take to flight. He received only £2000 as compensation for his losses, but private generosity did a good deal for him besides.

He went to Hackney to succeed Dr Price, but the Hackney philosophers held up their hands with horror and said, "What, Dr Priestley, the smoked-out of Birmingham, the atheist, the revolutionist !"

And so Priestley left Hackney and went to America, as he had friends there. William Cobbett saw him there, and did not like him because he spoke against England. This Cobbett was a man to whose acuteness there was no limit, and to the dense depths of whose stupidity there was no bottom. He looked upon Priestley as a lean sedition-monger, as a man heretical and unsound, and so he denounced him. The Americans did not receive Priestley with any great cordiality ; they were bent on exhibiting a little temporary gentility ; they had been a little too democratic, and now they wished to try a little gentlemanly democracy and moderate, kid-gloved republicanism, by way of contrast. In 1796

Priestley's wife died, and in 1804 he died in America. His *elogé* was pronounced at Paris by Cuvier.

Priestley and James Watt were two of the most eminent men ever connected with Birmingham; one discovered the steam-engine, the other oxygen. Priestley was a man of prodigious mental activity; he was always writing. Natural philosophy, grammar, geography, metaphysics, theology, philology, and history were among the subjects on which he wrote; and he wrote a great deal too much. As an historian there was nothing great about him; one of his greatest admirers said, "His Church History is laborious, and not uninteresting." Could ever book be damned with fainter praise than this? A great historian must be a great metaphysician, a great poet—he must have imagination and a mastery of language. Priestley's History was erudite, enlightened, "not uninteresting," and "laborious." If you answered the logic of it, you would do well. As a theologian he was not great—he was not equal either to Bull, Butler, Lardner, or Paley; he was a great captain, but not one of the chief captains. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that he was not a great power in theology. The nebulous Arianism of his day he brought together in the simple, clear, and homogeneous thing, called now Humanitarianism. From one end of his works to the other there is not a ray of imagination. He was such an excellent man, he was never in a pickle; he was so good, he was never in a scrape; he never sinned so as to understand the deeper tragedies of life. Cool, calm, pious, devout, he led a uniform, dispassionate life, content to follow where science led him. If a man wants a guide, philosopher, and friend—if he wants a confessor—let him not go to Priestley. But there is nothing foolisher than finding fault because a man is not everything.

Priestley was not a great orator, and he never could be, because he lacked imagination. He did not write all his own sermons; he never pretended that he did, and so there was no harm done. Pious, puritan, devout, intelligent, fearless, and brave, these are the qualities for which I admire Priestley. In politics he was large-hearted, generous, and liberal; there was nothing moonshiny or mountebank about him; there was no spasm, no noise about him; he was no fire-eater; in his politics

he soared above the region of like and dislike; he would not have been much good in a contested election. His political opinions were deduced from and founded upon the law of God. He drew conclusions from things of which he was the student, and not the creator. I cannot understand men, Liberals in their youth, turning Tories in their old age. I could no more turn Tory than I could deny the order of the stars.

As a man of science, Priestley was great. I do not say he was equal to Newton, but he must be grouped immediately around him. The discoverer of oxygen is a man who should be thought much of in a town like this. Such a man should not be left to teach children to eke out a living—to discover oxygen, and birch boys. There is no science on which the future of this country so much depends as on chemistry. The town of Birmingham has to wipe out a disgrace. Our fathers had a prophet amongst them, and they stoned him. They drove Priestley away with ignominy, and thereby placed a blot on the reputation of Birmingham, which it is the duty of their descendants to remove. Perhaps the people do not care to remove the blot. If King Solomon were to come to earth, and offer to write a second Book of Proverbs for nothing, he would not be heeded if a man came forward and offered to stand on his head, and drink a quart of ale meanwhile. But, whether the Priestley Memorial Fund will be taken up by the people or not, I can tell you that it *will* be carried through, even if ten or twelve men have to find the money between them.*

* “The admirers of Priestley, principally as a scientific discoverer, and in some degree also as a politician and philosopher, some time ago raised a fund which was spent in a beautiful marble statue, and this has been presented by Professor Huxley to the Mayor as representing the town. The sculptor is Mr F. J. Williamson of Esher, a pupil of Foley’s, and the statue formed of Sicilian marble, and in execution perfect, representing the character of the great scientific man with wonderful fidelity, is a high work of art and most creditable to the sculptor. With the peculiar wig of the period, and every part of the costume faithfully executed in detail, with expression as life-like as is possible in marble, Priestley is shown holding in his hand a burning glass, in the act of discovering oxygen. As Professor Huxley in his address afterwards pointed out, the burning glass is reduced to æsthetic proportions; but the incident chosen by the sculptor otherwise represents accurately the most noteworthy incident of the scientific career of Priestley.”—*The Priestley Memorial*. London: Longmans, Paternoster Row.

WILLIAM COBBETT.

BORN 1762. DIED 1835. (FROM 2ND GEORGE III TO 5TH WILLIAM IV.)

I AM to lecture to you to-night on William Cobbett, ploughboy, soldier, author, and Member of Parliament. I shall not attempt to furnish a detailed autobiography of my hero, but merely sketch in outline the leading events of his life. Five-and-twenty years are about long enough to lay the dust that a man who talked so plainly, loved so heartily, hated so strongly, and feared so little as William Cobbett necessarily raised about him; for he was one of those disagreeable men who always say what they mean, call spades spades, fools fools, and knaves knaves. The height of a man's position could not save him from the scorn and ridicule of Cobbett, who had a love for all honest men and independent men, and a hatred for all time-servers, gentilities, and worshippers of the great. No wonder, then, that wherever he went, in latter days, calumny, abuse, and hostility accompanied him. These five-and-twenty years have laid the dust, and enable us to do justice to a man who, whatever his faults were, was a thorough bit of good old English stuff: one who raised himself from the lowest position to the highest, and who spoke the English language as only three other men could speak it.

The time has now come when I can give an illustrative coat of varnish to that picture of a thorough-going, old-fashioned Englishman. I like him a great deal better than I like Dr Franklin. I like Franklin a good deal, but he had the bad fortune to be born an American; and that double-chinned, smooth, money-chinking, prosperous man, let me do what I will, I can never love him. I respect, admire, esteem him, and all that, but I never loved Franklin, and I believe I never shall. But there are certain things about Cobbett that oblige us to love him. He was one of the most mighty egotists the world ever had—he believed in himself thoroughly—and whenever he wanted to illustrate a

principle of righteousness he pointed to himself. This egotism is shown in every one of Cobbett's books; and in reading Cobbett we have to pay the price that always has to be paid for the writings of strong self-educated men. Education crushes egotism, and makes a man so full of authorities that he never dares to quote himself; while the self-educated man always says, "*I did, I thought, I said*"—and therefore you must pardon Cobbett, who, whenever he wants to show you a beautiful example of righteousness, says, "Look at me." And I do pardon him; for real big words are offensive only when they are the source of small deeds.

Cobbett's early life was spent in Hampshire, as a ploughboy. A huntsman, on one occasion, without any provocation, wantonly gave the boy a cut with his whip, and Cobbett took a whimsical revenge upon him. Few of the actions of a boy eight years of age supply such a key to the after life of a man as this does. It shows a rough sense of tyranny, a rough sense of justice in the boy that exactly explains the conduct of William Cobbett at twenty, at forty, at sixty years old.

In 1782, he forsook his rustic occupation, and endeavoured to get service on board a man-of-war; but, failing that, he took a situation in London as copying clerk. He did not stop long at that, however, but one day, being down at Chatham, he enlisted as a private soldier. In a short time he was made corporal, and by cleanliness, intelligence, and an extraordinary habit of punctuality, he made his way upwards, and got promoted to the rank of sergeant-major over the heads of thirty sergeants, who, strange to say, did not hate him on that account. He shows the cause for his rapid promotion in a book which, when I say that it is about one of the wisest books ever written, you will understand how few people have ever heard of it. If you have not read William Cobbett's "*Advice to Young Men*" you are benighted beings—you each need a missionary to your own share, and I will be that missionary. You must each read the book, and not only that, but you must buy copies, and distribute them. Cobbett never pretended that his rise in life was due to luck, chance, fate, destiny, fortune, stars, his ship coming home, his uncle remembering him in his will, or anything else by which idle people seek to justify their idleness and want of success. If you have the

necessary virtues, you must have the equally necessary success. William Cobbett was not an architect, or anything so fine; he was only a bricklayer, and built a bridge from poverty, obscurity, and lowliness, to wisdom, high place, fame, and station, brick by brick, using as his materials industry and punctuality, and only spending three farthings while he earned four.

Cobbett had a great horror of tea and coffee, which he called "kettle-slops." I heartily endorse Cobbett's denunciation of these "slops." The custom of frequent tea-drinking is a sign of a generation of feebleness, want of fibre, emasculation, weak philanthropy, and cant. Cobbett got up in the summer at daylight, and in the winter at four o'clock in the morning. His mode of living was characterised by entire absence of effeminacy. By his indomitable energy and attention to self-training, he was able to earn a livelihood by teaching others, and learned to write the English that is only equalled by the English of Dean Swift, an educated man; John Bunyan, a tinker; and Benjamin Franklin, printer's devil.

At New Brunswick, where his regiment was stationed, Cobbett became acquainted with his future wife, the daughter of a sergeant of artillery; and the account he has given of his courtship, marriage, and early married life, is the loveliest love story I have ever read—and for some sin of my youth I have been condemned to read about all the love poetry ever written. At four o'clock on a cold winter's morning, Cobbett saw the sergeant's daughter engaged in the unromantic occupation of cleaning out a tub, and he then saw in her so much beauty, grace, and true womanhood, that he at once exclaimed, "That's the woman for me," adding, in his autobiographical book, "so that this matter was at once settled, and as firmly fixed as if it had been written in the Book of Fate." Now, that is one of the noblest sentences ever written. It *was* written in the book of fate, for the will of a real man is a page in the book of fate. Let parsons and theologians talk to us about the powerlessness of free-will, and so on, but the strong will of a man is one of God's methods of doing God's work. The sentence was written in the book of fate, and therefore in his will—it was written in his will, and therefore in the book of fate. He got married, and made a tender-hearted husband.

In 1791, Cobbett got his discharge, in consideration of good conduct and useful services. He at once laid a charge of peculation against four officers of the regiment. But on the day for the trial Cobbett did not appear—for some unexplained reason he went over to France. When he arrived there, the French Revolution having done its little work of upsetting, was trying its hand at building up. The history of all revolutions is the history of destruction, followed either by God in His goodness sending to a nation a master-builder who can construct something new and better than the old, or He in His goodness sends a despotic warrior who can drive the revolution into order, and put a stop to its excesses. Once or twice in England, God has sent us a master-builder; once or twice in France He has sent them a despotic warrior. Therefore I would advise you not to put your trust in revolutions. Cobbett, who hated revolutions, was soon glad to get out of the terrible scenes there.

Cobbett then went to America, where he came in contact with Dr Priestley, who had been driven from this town of Birmingham by the fanaticism of a brutal mob, hounded on by a miscreant magistracy, and an ignorant and brutish gentry. Dr Priestley was, of course, not over-well disposed towards England, and when Cobbett heard some of the Doctor's statements concerning the vile usage he met with in Birmingham (usage which constitutes the most shameful page in local history) his back was up, and he wrote a pamphlet the reverse of sugar; for he was then a staunch Tory, with an instinctive belief that England was the best country in the world. He thought her grass the greenest, her daughters the fairest, her sons the most beautiful. He thought her Constitution came next to the Bible and Prayer-book; he thought the King, Lords, and Commons came next to the Holy Trinity, and were almost as sacred, and, without knowing the least about it, he swallowed the whole thing.

And here I must discharge my conscience of one little matter before I go further. My soul doth loathe that species of modern Liberal with whom it is a matter of instinct when this country and any other country go to quarrel, to take it for granted that all other nations are right and that England is wrong. Before I know a question, I go for Old England; after I know it, I try to go for the truth. But there are men, whom some of you support,

who, if there is a war between England and nasty, dirty Yehs and Chinamen, before they know anything of the matter, say the enemy is right. Before I know, I am sure England, my own country, my Jerusalem, my people, are right until I prove them wrong. It must be proved to me before I go with these new-fangled Liberals in supposing that England is always wrong, while Chinese, Hindoos, Zulus, Russians, Feejees, Kaffirs, Niggers, and all others are always right. I admire Cobbett for his love of country. Feeling some satisfaction at finding myself several pounds avoirdupois lighter in consequence of this declaration, I will proceed.

Cobbett achieved great fame in America as a pamphleteer, thus becoming the most successful politician with the pen that the world has ever yet seen. There were then two parties in America—one for a union of interests with England; the other for France. Cobbett, as might be expected, joined the former, heart and hand, in consequence of which there was much opposition against him. This, however, did not terrify him, and all his opponents were treated as a good terrier treats rats. I know that, according to your miserable notions of humanity, it is a dreadful thing to put a terrier into a barn. He goes at the rats with vigour, gives them one or two shakes, tosses them over his head, and there is an end of them. So it was with Cobbett, who had the strongest aversion for rats of all kinds, whether Whig or Tory, whether belonging to the Church or the State, and never saw one without attacking it. The mob threatened him in America; but he possessed that first, second, third, and last of virtues—courage. The one virtue that never fails a man in this world is courage. Never is a man knocked down until he deserves it. The Scriptures tell us to resist the devil; and if we can resist the devil, we know we can resist everybody else.

At length Cobbett returned to England, where the Government, knowing of his great ability as a Tory pamphleteer, thought they had a great catch in him, and well they might. They made overtures to him; but he had now come nearer the British Constitution, and found he did not like it so well as at a distance. He changed his opinions. He refused their offer of the plant and copyright of the *True Briton*, and commenced a paper of his own. For thirty years, with the exception of eleven weeks, he never

failed to send copy for the *Political*, afterwards the *Annual Register*, and he exercised an influence over the minds of the people of England far greater than any other man. He had a rare fight with the newspapers, some of which would have gone out of existence altogether had they not had him to attack. Some men are privileged to feed writers, and a happy privilege it is; for if a man who has a wife and six or seven children can get a guinea a week for abusing you, why, let him abuse you. Cobbett was now a Liberal, for a closer inspection of the Constitution and the glorious institutions he admired so much at a distance, convinced him that all was not gold that glittered, especially when he saw how hardly some of the laws pressed on the poor farm labourers. He dearly loved the poor peasantry of the country—loved them like a parent; but he did not think that the ballot-box, or any other political tinkering or carpentering would regenerate the country; or that if they gave a working man a vote, he would know political economy at once, get up in Adam Smith by instinct, and swallow M'Culloch without knowing it. He had a passionate love for the peasant and ploughman, and he liked the mechanics very well, but he thought there was too much fuss made about them. He did not think much of those people who made such a noise about the “dear working-classes,” and invited them to meetings, and asked them to “please to come in their dirt.” No, he affectionately requested them to come in their working clothes. *My* affectionate request to the working classes is to go home after their work, and wash themselves, and then come here in their best. Plenty has been said about the working-classes; but I like a man that can strike a furrow right across a five-acre field, without being two inches out of the line. A good furrow is as hard to do, and lovelier when done, than anything I know; and yet you laugh at the man who does it, and say he is a clodhopper, a chaw-bacon, and that he eats turnips. I praise the agricultural labourer for his skill, and I admire the uncomplaining patience with which he adapts himself to the painful exigencies of his hard lot. Cobbett called Lord Brougham a “nasty palaverer,” for wanting to give working men the *Penny Magazine* and *Edinburgh Review*, which, in his opinion, would not light a fire, nor boil a pot, nor put anything into it. Through all his troubles and labours, he stuck up for the

labourer, like a bit of tough oak as he was. Cobbett did not care so much that the peasant should have the suffrage, as that he should be well fed, well clothed, and lightly taxed. He did not think so much about religion either, as he said, "I would rather that the peasants should have the Inquisition, with full bellies and rosy cheeks, than have both civil and religious liberty and starve." That is very dreadful, no doubt ; but it is very sensible, and very characteristic of the man.

He was several times tried for libel, and was on one occasion imprisoned for two years in Newgate. In 1826, he offered himself as a candidate to represent Preston in Parliament, and failed ; and in 1829 and 1830 he went through the country addressing the farmers at agricultural dinners, thus having a little Parliament of his own. On one occasion he came to Birmingham, where he had a discussion with Thomas Attwood, who, I am told, had the best of it ; but as I did not hear it, I do not believe that. When, after many rebuffs, he got into Parliament in 1832, as a member for Oldham, the atmosphere of the place (which he called a "den of thieves") helped to kill him, and, after making a few good speeches, he sickened, and died. I leave him now to your further study and further judgment.

RICHARD COBDEN.

BORN 1804. DIED 1865. (FROM 44TH GEORGE III. TO 28TH VICTORIA.)

THERE are comparative advantages, and disadvantages, in seeing a man's face very close. A certain fine play of emotion, certain peculiar signs of feeling are caught, and the man's character is better estimated than if seen at a distance. At a distance certain defects are not seen, and the face may gain thereby. So it is with a man's character. If we look very near, very close, we are apt to see slight traces of emotion, true feeling, kindness and nobleness that time and distance will afterwards remove; or we may see foibles and pettinesses that may not afterwards be discovered.

For us to-night there is no choice. I have to draw the character of a man who was amongst us so often, and who lived so thoroughly in the class to which the majority of us belong, who held so heartily the opinions many of us are consecrated to, that if we run the risk of seeing little foibles that posterity will never hear of, we are nevertheless in a better position to do justice to him, because time and oblivion have as yet cheated us of nothing, and the grave is too new to rob us of one single sign of emotion, tenderness, nobleness, or truth.

I shall draw very briefly the outline of Mr Cobden's life, because it is too recent, too well known, by some even too much mingled in, to require any very long and elaborate outline. On the 3d of June 1804, at Dunford, near Midhurst, in Sussex, Cobden was born, his father belonging to the class now getting so rare—a yeoman, a small farmer who lived upon the land, as his fathers had done before him. I have been told that Cobden's father was not very prosperous, and even if he had been, a small Sussex farm is not the place for a man of large views or real genius; therefore, Richard turned out early in life. He went to the great city—the city of cities, indeed—and entered a London

warehouse. From his master he got an early lecture, because of the strong propensity he showed for reading. This dear old bungle-headed commercial man but represents the old-fashioned class, pettifogging in his dealings, small in his comprehension, and unfortunate in his predictions. He held up to Richard Cobden frightful examples of commercial men who had gone to ruin through cherishing a fatal desire for the reading of books. Happily the lectures were in vain ; the apprentice would read the books, though the master would keep him from them ; and, by a strange chance, the apprentice succeeded, the master failed, and the apprentice had the grace and generousness to allow him £50 a year for life. So that Cobden was able to repay exceedingly bad advice by the exceedingly substantial token of success which had attended his not following it.

Cobden removed to a firm in Watling Street, and, through the accident of a fellow-clerk falling ill, he became a commercial traveller, and a bag-man. Sharp, shrewd, belonging to this generation and no other, not very inclined to value any samples except those he carried in his own pack, he was able to push with a great deal of sharpness, but without at any time passing the line of strict honesty and truth.

His employers giving up the business, it divided itself into three firms ; the head being the men who had been in the employment of the firm itself. Cobden belonged to the one which set itself up at Manchester, as "Cobden and Company." Here it was that his shrewdness, good taste, and exceedingly clear eye for what he was and what he had to do came into play. The fashion in Manchester in his day was old and slow. When the firm put out a few pieces of print, they quietly watched to see which took people's fancy, and, having made safe and sure, they then proceeded to print some more. But such a feeble way of commerce would hardly suit a man like Cobden. So he at once issued excellent patterns and famous stuff, knowing they would succeed ; and those the English people would not take to were sent abroad, and, thank God ! the tastes abroad were very different to what they were at home. What could not be inflicted upon the English people, the natives of Africa and the people of China were ready to take in any quantity ; and they could not be frightened by any hideousness. Cobden's prints became famous,

and obtained a very great name ; and his share in the profits was £2000 a year.

About this time politics began to whisper their seductive talk to him, and Mr Cobden began his political life. In 1830, his career was not very distinguished, while in 1834 we find him making a tour in Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and the United States, of which tour he frequently talked, because from it he had very much learned. When he came home he wrote certain letters in the *Manchester Times*; and then came his first pamphlet, entitled "England, Ireland, and America, by a Manchester manufacturer." This pamphlet contains a statement of nearly all the principles he lived so nobly to defend. It has his peculiar views—all the old-fashioned notions of the old Liberal party of England—Peace, Retrenchment, Free-trade, and Non-intervention. It led to a great deal of controversy, especially on the matter of Turkey ; for he was not a great believer in the necessity of Turkey to this country, nor in keeping that old rottenness much longer going. These were heretical views—for it was a part of the high politics of this country to believe in Turkey, and in the doing of anything for Turkey.

Then he published a pamphlet upon Russia; and in this he put forth another of his peculiar opinions. He thought, all his life long, a great deal of the education of this country was utter nonsense ; and he raised his voice against that delightful absurdity of the upper classes making their children learn antique geography, and not geography at home. How few could pass an examination upon Bradshaw, or tell the names of railways in England ! If they look at the letters L. N. W. and G. W. R., they may tell what they mean ; but if they look simply at the letters C. R. and L. and Y., they know nothing about them. Hence Cobden spoke disrespectfully of the Ilissus because he once saw it damned up by washerwomen, yet which every boy was taught to revere while they knew nothing of the Mississippi which runs through two thousand miles of country. *I* don't see why the little river is to be spoken of disrespectfully because modern washerwomen have put it to use. The smaller the river the more noble the men who live upon it and make it famous. You may put a million of boors upon a mighty stream, and the river will still be mighty ; but it takes a noble people to make it great.

Cobden also put forth the deplorable ignorance which prevailed in this country in the fundamental principles of social and political economy. He found almost the whole nation in darkness, and he proposed that as they had a Linnæan Society for looking after plants, they should also have a Smithian Institution to be called after Adam Smith, and devoted to the hard labour of endeavouring to drive a little common sense into the heads of English politicians, teaching those first principles of political economy which it was his honour to propagate the wide world over.

Now he showed a zeal for the place in which his lot was cast. He took a great interest in the Manchester Athenæum. He wrote a pamphlet entitled "Incorporate your borough," and did more to promote, perhaps, than any other man, the incorporation of the borough; and one of the first titles he had was Mr Alderman Cobden. There are glories about the alderman—about the title, I mean, not the individual—which ought not to be forgotten. The title comes straight from old English life, and is derived from the self-governed life of England, which it is every wise man's duty to preserve, and to protest against its being frittered away. This was about the only title Cobden ever took. He put up for Stockport, and at first did not succeed; but in 1841 he was returned for that borough.

It was about this time that he became acquainted with his fast friend—(there have been five-and-twenty years of genial and uniform friendship between those two men)—Mr Bright.

Mr Bright sought him out, and found him in his warehouse in Mossley Street, wanting him to come over to Rochdale to make a speech on Education. From that day those two men were seldom or never parted.

It was said that they never went into opposite lobbies of the House of Commons but twice; and I forget the subject of the twice told difference.

In 1838, when the Anti-corn Law League was formed, Cobden warmly espoused the principles they professed. He did not take credit for originating them—he knew that that must be given chiefly to Adam Smith, and, next to him, to the old, wise, witty, venerable General Thompson. In the contest that ensued, Birmingham took next to no part; in the biggest battle in

modern times, the people of this town merely looked on. When I came to Birmingham, I found a handful of wise men who met in the Public Office to support the League. The question is probably a sore one, and I will turn from it. The leaders in Birmingham have always been men who have had quaint notions, queer ways ; and this is amongst one of the strangest : that a town which has profited so much by the repeal of the Corn Laws, should have taken so little part in the struggle. At length the fight was over, the battle was won ; and it is not worth while for us to settle to whom the greatest praise is due ; but they who fought before the battle was wrought out, deserve the largest credit, if any is to be apportioned.

After this Cobden went abroad, and the wise men of almost every nation received him as one who had done a work for all time. Few Englishmen make a reputation so wide and so universal as Cobden did. During his absence, he was elected for the West Riding, and returned to differ from his countrymen, and to express that difference in the same calm courage as before. This was on the ugly Crimean war, which he always opposed, and which he only ceased to oppose when opposition would have been factious ; for when people are in the midst of a fight, it is better to wait until they come out, and have their wounds dressed, before you lecture them as to their future good behaviour. Then followed the Chinese war, in the debate on which Cobden took a part well-known to all ; the Dissolution ; the re-election, and the rejection of many eminent men ; the defeat of the Government, and the short reign of Lord Derby.

On Mr Cobden's return from America, he found a seat in the Cabinet ready for him, which he declined. He didn't like Lord Palmerston's conduct, and he told him so in Parliamentary terms. Then he turned his attention to the commercial relations between this country and France. He loved the great French nation, and some of his friends had been talking over a little opening that they thought they saw in the thick armour of French Protectionism and commercial stupidity. Mr Bright and Mr Cobden went down and saw Mr Gladstone, and then they went and saw Lord Palmerston, and the happy result was that Mr Cobden went to France. There he saw the Emperor, and then he fell to work ; and with a minute, painstaking, and constant industry and per-

petual good temper, and an adherence to principle that now and then gave way for the sake of the main good, the great man untitled, almost uncommissioned, succeeded in doing perhaps the most fruitful act of recent politics. There may be some few that cry out against him. If we had been in the rag trade, for instance, or the great bone business, we should have thought him a little treacherous to his principles. Well, I believe he was; for it was here that Mr Cobden showed he could be pliable, here that he could be expedient. On some questions on which he and his countrymen differed he would not be pliable; but here, for the sake of the whole, he sometimes waived a part. Like a wise man, he gave in where he saw it was wisdom to do so. The principle was not much affected; details could be subsequently modified. England cannot bestow too much praise upon the treaty. It kept three or four great towns alive during those sad winters when the cotton famine came. It opened the ports of this country to one of the most growing trades we have ever had. It joined the hands of two old foes in a firmer, and wiser, and cooler grasp than was possible on any other ground whatsoever. It joined two nations hostile in history, enemies by tradition, members of faiths that were always looking at one another with dissembled hate, and showed that it was possible for these two great nations to remain at peace. It gave the world this just guarantee—that so long as England and France remain at peace, there will be little possibility for any other nation to disturb the peace of the world itself. There are men in this town who know the exceeding patience and minute industry that was necessary to carry out the tiresome treaty. It was not the affirming of great principles, but the regulation of details. Fancy a list of Birmingham goods alone! All these had to be wrangled over. Every step almost had to be fought; for the French Protectionists were as obstinate as the old English Protectionists had been. The consequence was that after many a week of protracted labour, that did fatal injury to Cobden I fear, the greatest treaty of modern times was carried. What was the Treaty of Utrecht, or the Treaty of Vienna, compared to a treaty which taught two nations good sense, mutual admiration, and mutual respect—a treaty that bound over two great nations to keep the peace towards one another? On the conclusion of the treaty Mr Gladstone paid a high tribute to Mr Cobden.

There is no more need to follow Cobden's history. You know it. A body constantly weakening made his presence in political counsels unfrequent and rare. True to his principles to the last, when he heard that strange scheme for the defence of Canada—a scheme for defending a country which, if it could not be defended by those fine old Generals Frost and Snow, would be defended by no General at all—he must go up to town and try to speak, and try to vote—a rash act, showing the ruling passion strong in death. It was fatal. He never left the great city again. It was only when the breath of life was gone from that hard labouring man, that he was carried down to sleep, where that only son of his sleeps, and where so much of his heart had so long been sleeping; and there now rest father and son—a busy life ended where it began. He was born in the country, and was buried in the country. He was born amongst the farmers, and lived amongst the farmers, and loved them. Still, at one time they accounted him their deadliest enemy. Some of them thought he was a modern incarnation of Satan; but they learned to know better, and welcome him back to the old glorious county of Sussex as their best friend. And now, Richard Cobden—the commercial traveller, the farmer's enemy, the incarnation of evil—quietly sleeps in one of the counties most dedicated to the pursuits of the English farmers, amid those who learnt to know that he loved them wisely when they were not wise, that he loved them well when they were too prejudiced and too passionate to know it.

Before delineating some of the glories of Richard Cobden's character, it may be well, not exactly to contrast, but to place him side by side with five or six of the most noticeable men of his own time. I cannot help, when I think of Cobden, thinking of William Cobbett. Perhaps it is because they were born so near the same place. The father of both of them had little farms; they both loved farming and became politicians. William Cobbett advocated a popular cause. But there the parallel soon ceases. Cobbett, passionate, prejudiced, violent, coarse, vituperative, and vulgar; he did immense good service, but it was often at the expense of stirring up ugly passions, and he himself was not altogether free from some of those stains which, while they do not alter one's admiration for the man's genius, considerably limit

our estimate of the man's worth. There was a touch of the demagogue about Cobbett; there was none about Cobden. Then one thinks of O'Connell—that wonderful man!—and the awful power he once had over the Irish; who might have taught that nation wisdom, but who wasted his splendid powers in the most hideous and cruel pretences, and stirred up a cry that he never intended to have gratified. He passed across our wondering gaze like a great meteor or firework, with a deal of splendour and a deal of noise; and when he was dead left little but a great deal of stench and smoke. We next think of the Duke of Wellington. What parallel is there between Cobden and Wellington? Well, they were a good deal alike. They both told the truth always, under all circumstances, and nothing but the truth. The old Duke was simple with his tongue, plain with his pen, sharp and decisive. As one well said of him, his account of himself was always the exact fact. The old Duke's style had no nap in it, so that there was no room for the lies to hide. So Cobden's style was simple, plain, short, unaffected. They both knew nothing but their duty; they both strove to do nothing else. Both were unselfish, both unaffected, both disinterested; but there the parallel must end. The greater soldier did his duty; and very queer duties this country sometimes sent him to do. He could not help it; it was not for him to settle whether it was right or wrong; it was for him to do it. He was a great old Tory, and the consequence was that his great works were written on sand, for it is the penalty of Conservatism to have its memory written on sand. The next great wave comes, and where is it? It is gone. I have not higher respect for any class of men than the English Conservatives; they are such a bold and gallant people; they lose every battle they go into, and are ready to fight again. Where is the Duke of Wellington's work now? Much of it is written in history, and nowhere else. Then comes Sir Robert Peel, a greater man than either of the others mentioned; but with all our respect for him we cannot but admit that he slowly and very reluctantly carried out what other men had long ago taught. His position enabled him to give official sanction to what he had resisted; and while we admit the merit of a man who forsook his party to do service to his nation, still we cannot consent to class him with one who, in evil days, saw a principle and clung to it when it was

unpopular, advocated it when it was dangerous, and at last lived to see it enthroned by virtue. Then we have the last great man, whose loss we must mourn—we think of the Prince Consort. There was a great man! But what a profound pity one has for a prince, born, unfortunately, amongst the great; cradled amongst the tomfoolery of mediævalism; his poor limbs, in youth, like the limbs of aristocracy, swathed in custom, rank, folly, precedent, and feebleness. How hard it is now-a-days for a prince to become a great man! How hard for such a man to be great, simple, and wise! And yet this the Prince Consort was. He walked out of a palace to become a man of sense. He was enabled to understand the nineteenth century; to be a student of the sciences, a lover of philosophy; to comprehend that the future greatness of nations depends rather upon commercial relations and the cultivation of science and true art, than it does upon the old wars and the old rivalries. But when I put Richard Cobden side by side with this man, I think I must call him the greatest—if not the greatest in faculty, yet the greatest in result. While Cobbett's work is much of it happily going on; O'Connell's dismissed and forgotten; the Duke of Wellington's out of sight, a great deal of it; Sir Robert Peel's lasting, but lacking completeness and massiveness; the Prince Consort's is still fruitful, but lacks the genius and the greatness of the work of Cobden.

Cobden did two things: he taught two great nations common sense; and if there is an achievement more difficult than that, I do not know it. Fighting battles is easy, but to conquer prejudices is hard. He first taught the English people sense, and then, as if that were not task enough for a Hercules, he undertook a still greater—he undertook to teach the French people sense. Having slowly converted English squires and English farmers, he undertook the still more difficult task of converting French statesmen and French manufacturers. What did he leave behind him? These two great works: two nations brought over to the initial principles of free trade. How this was done, lets some light into his character. What we all praise him for, is the principle of unselfishness, the perfect disinterestedness of the man. It is pleasant to see a man do so much work and get nothing for it, as it were.

One likes to see the man in the title which he sometimes

received in jest—The Unadorned One. Sir Robert Peel fixed it upon him. He said it was the unadorned eloquence of Mr Cobden that did so much for Free Trade. Is it possible to be eloquent without adornment? What most people call eloquence is beneath a wise man's contempt—big words, sound and fury, many of the words unintelligible, and a large part of the rest useless, if intelligible. Most people call eloquence “bursts”—“bursts of eloquence,” they say. Well, Cobden could indulge in bursts of eloquence if people stirred his heart and roused his opposition; but what can we say when a gentleman gets ready his bursts a fortnight before? and when his burst comes off every night exactly at the same minute? I know the orators, and I can tell you about it. At 8.15, burst the first; at 8.30, burst the second. Some of you admire it; some of you mistake perspiration for inspiration, and call it eloquence. The Duke of Wellington was an eloquent man when young. In what did his eloquence consist? He said fit things in few words. What was Mr Cobden's eloquence? The eloquence of fact, reason, sense, and conviction. When he had got all this, then he could appeal to sentiment to give it warmth, and to passion sometimes to give it the needful swing. “Unadorned,” it was “adorned the most.” But the man's character was undecorated by the rags and frippery of this world. If it were lawful, the words of Peter against female vanity in dress might be parodied thus, as descriptive of Cobden's principles:—“Whose adorning, let it not be of titles and rank, of wearing of Court suits and gold lace, and the putting on of apparels, and the putting on of the sword, and having heraldry, plush breeches, copper stick, gold stick, and being equerry-in-waiting and flunkey-in-honour; but rather let it be with the simplicity of a man, and the glorious incorruptible ornament of a straight-forward tongue, an honest heart, a sincere spirit, and great principles.” I confess my admiration is for the man in his untitled glory. It is so sad to see so many men who have served their country and come to a certain point, and then there is that lacquered sham of the Middle Ages waiting to take them, and they drop into the great gulf one after another, and one peeps over and says, “What has become of that famous old Radical?” and one gets the answer, “Got a Court suit on—helping to keep up that worn-out folly, instead of remaining true to the rank from

which he sprang." I would scout the idea of making such a man as Cobden a peer.

As a self-made man, Cobden had a little of the dogmatism and egotism pertaining to all men of that class. Though usually calm and quiet, he was apt to put a man down if he differed from him, and found it rather difficult to be tolerant if a pet croquet was under discussion; but under these little impatiences there usually ruled a calm, quiet, deep spirit, for he was a man never angry. He never brought into politics angry passions or spiteful feelings. He was not a demagogue. He flattered neither the great nor the small. He seldom appealed to class prejudice. He was never an anachronism. He did not do as some who shall be nameless—talk politics in 1865 as though he lived in the last generation. Mr Cobden never ranted, roared, cursed, or swore; never vituperated; never, to use a vulgar phrase, "pitched into" anything or anybody, but always relied on reason for convincing his hearers. I find Richard Cobden incapable of trickery, incapable of buffoonery; I find him incapable of insincerity or of hatred. I find in him no bitterness, and only wonder how he managed to stop in the House of Commons so long, where no one who is familiar can say there are no trickery and dodges.

Mr Cobden differed with his countrymen on the subjects of education and peace. It is my conviction that fighting is a necessary condition of the present order of things, but that there is a "more excellent way" which will one day prevail on the earth. Richard Cobden looked forward to that sweet day in the far future, and brought back a branch, and endeavoured to plant it in the soil of the present. He watered it, sometimes with tears; laboured at it, gardened around it, and talked about it; but it would not grow, and then he grew impatient and blamed everybody about him. His dream was a holy and noble one. He simply endeavoured to plant his plant too early.

Richard Cobden's great services have promoted the wealth of nations. He also taught the nations the true protection against the corruption incident, in the long run, to civilisation, in his simplicity of living and simplicity of manners.

WELLINGTON AND NAPOLEON.

WELLINGTON—BORN, 1769. DIED, 1852.

NAPOLEON—BORN, 1769. DIED, 1821.

YESTERDAY, in London, after the great man (whom I purposely call great) was consigned to his grave, the Garter King-at-Arms gave forth all his styles, honours, and titles. It may not be unbecoming in me to do what the herald-king did, and trace what led to the giving of those titles, the abilities of which they were the symbols, and show why it was they honoured the man. If I compare him with the other great man, with whom he fought, you will excuse me if I indulge in a little national vanity, and praise the Englishman at the expense of his opponent. And if, at the conclusion, you believe that the name of Napoleon Bonaparte appears more attractive, I hope when you look at our own good Englishman, you will find him more honourable and worthy of admiration, and if not so much like the lion, still like that faithful animal which guards his master, noble to the last, humble and self-denying. He who looks longest will learn to give Wellington a higher place in history than Napoleon ever can have.

I am no admirer of the cosmopolitan spirit, but while wishing to love all mankind, I feel that patriotism should ever be cherished; and it is pardonable in a man to prefer the men of his own land to those of any other. Our great countryman now dead we well knew, and I shall bring forward the other man with a view to contrast and comparison.

When Napoleon began his career, he was engaged in that struggle for liberty for all men, against the monopoly of a small party, shut up in feudalism, and who maintained the right of ruling the world as they thought good, and for their own pleasure. The evil of the Revolution was at the door of those whose tyranny and despotism had pressed the spring down so low that when it did rebound it was almost as fatal to the people as to the rulers. At that time, in Napoleon sprung up a mighty talent.

He loved soldiership; but was looked upon by many men in England as the representative of a new life. Many took his side, wept at his disasters, gloried in his victories, and opposed Pitt and his Ministry—not out of love to Napoleon, but because they regarded him as a new symbol of freedom and liberty in Europe.

Napoleon had no aim beyond himself. He had one great idol—himself. He was the most intense worshipper of self the world ever knew. He had opportunities which no other man had. He made his way through the frippery and nonsense of the day; for which I admire him. But when I see him with his feet in satin sandals, and employing artists to caricature the old Roman robes, fetching the poor Pope to crown him, with the oil-bottle to anoint him, using religion merely to cheat men;—for he cared no more for religion than some of the philosophers whom he helped to put down—Catholic when it suited him, and Protestant when it pleased him—when I see all these things, my sympathy for the man drops, and I no longer look on him as the advocate of a new regime, but as a man with no other aim but to worship himself, with no great cause to uphold him, no retreat when his work was done, no duty to perform when his fighting was over. And when he marries an emperor's daughter, discarding Josephine for the purpose of becoming Emperor Napoleon; when he wears laurels, and becomes one of the race of valets, my interest in him is over—the man has lost the meaning of life, his first love is over, he is no longer the protester for men against forms, nor the asserter of the new life of Europe against the old regime of royal and priestly tyranny; and, that being the case, my admiration of Napoleon ceases. He never really had any great cause to rely on. He was, in every respect, a selfish man—not in the vulgar sense, for what it might bring him; but he was selfish in a noble sense, he had a firm faith in himself, took little counsel of anybody, held other people cheap, and could do his own work. So far, he had self-dependence. But he measured other men's rights by his own will, which to him was the measure of all things. He was unscrupulous in his means, and petty in his ends. He once said that there were only two motives which governed mankind—fear and interest. At love he laughed; at friendship he mocked. He loved France, but it was for himself. *He* was France. He

did not so much serve France as he made France serve him. Doubts, fears, and difficulties which haunted others, he knew nothing of. There was no meanness he would not stoop to, in the shape of knavery, assassination, and theft. He cared not how many fell in battle nor what happened, so that his dream of being universal ruler might be realised, to accomplish which piety and truth were sacrificed by him.

If, then, you ask me if I admire Napoleon, I answer that in one sense I do; for I like to see a man do his work well. The man who with a will carries an army over the Alps, is a refreshment and a joy; and we learn from him to prop our vacillating will. By him, the word "impossible" went out of the French dictionary, and out of his own soul. I like his will and utter fearlessness. He widened the regions of human possibility, and showed that nature was not exhausted, that history was not used up. He did mighty works, in which men, weak or strong, find consolation and strength. He wrote "can" upon everything. I, however, almost love him for exposing hereditary incapacity. He was, in some respects, the democrat in the noblest sense—not of the people, but of the rights of the people—the right of any horse-boy to become a king. He opened a career for talent, and made a way for capability. He showed many an inclination for internal reform, and, if circumstances had allowed, he would have done more for the people; he was the giver of the French code, and he was a man of large aims.

But the fault of his life was the turning France into a camp, and Europe into a battle-field, by which he cut off his opportunities for introducing a new regime, and initiating a new era of social progress. He surrounded war with a false glory, and filled the minds of men with that detestable phrase—"glory." There is no member of the Peace Society or issuer of peace placards who hates war more than I do; and it is because I hate war so much that I admire Wellington, who did more than any other man to reduce war to its proper proportion, and put it in its true light. Napoleon intoxicated men with the love of war, while Wellington made war an awful duty and a terrible necessity. I will not say there are no causes in which it is worthy to fight; but I will say that he had no right to give up the defenceless child committed to his care. If you attack my child it is my duty to

go into you, to do the best I can for the defence of the helpless. If this dear old land, made and continued a nation by God—the land where our forefathers sleep, the land we love—if any foreign power say to us, “We bid you cease to be a nation,” and tell us to commit suicide, or they will murder us, I would say, “Nay, we must stand up for fatherland ; we must defend the women and children of the land, the creed and soil.” I love peace, but I love justice better. Righteousness first, and peace second. Let us have the thing that is just and right, and leave our happiness, peace, welfare, and comfort in the hands of the All-wise. So far I am a fighting man.

Look at the motives and ends of each of the two warriors. Napoleon held out the plunder of towns as an inducement to his men, and he was a great thief himself. Wellington was terribly severe, believing that severity was true mercy. In Spain he hung a man for stealing a looking-glass. The man watched the army, and went out to see what he could pillage. He went into a house, and took the only thing it contained, a looking-glass ; but who should come up, just as he was returning with it, but the terrible Commander-in-chief and some officers. In five minutes the tree bore strange fruit ; and the first sight which the French saw was an Englishman hung up by his own countrymen for stealing other people’s property. That was teaching the men that they had to do a terrible duty—not to fill an empty purse. He was a terrible disciplinarian, but it was real mercy. But what fearful things the French did ! and although the English sometimes did wrong, it was against their orders. I have spoken of the refreshing nature of Napoleon’s will. While I admire the passage of the Alps, I admire the passage through Spain a great deal more. Wellington led a very ill-clothed, ill-fed, and ill-paid army to a country where he received but little assistance. His officers were always grumbling and despairing, and he had a niggardly Ministry at home. What with incapable Dukes of York, put in to do duty merely because they were Dukes of York, the English came to believe that they never could conquer on land but were always to be conquered. Notwithstanding this, Wellington never turned back till at last he reached Paris victorious, having defeated every French marshal sent against him. He did his best, and that was sufficient for him ; he had simply his duty

to do, and that sustained him. There is nothing more strange in modern times than his career ; becoming greater than kings, but content to be a servant. Had he been unscrupulous, like Napoleon, he might have continued to lead armies ; but he returned here to take his place and become a household word with Englishmen ; and his wise counsels were ever looked up to by the Queen and her people in the hour of peril. He was the greatest *servant* of history, and that is his great glory. Napoleon's ambition was to be a master, and he became one ; the ambition of Wellington was to do the duty of a servant, and he did it. Wellington was a noble example of self-denial and unselfishness. What a lover of truth our man was, and what a boundless liar the other was ! He only spoke the truth when it suited his purpose. He played tricks with dates, and sent false reports of victories before the battles were concluded. Our man never altered a date, but put things down as they were. Napoleon never would admit of anybody's glorious services but his own. Whatever glory his marshals got, he took it from them and disparaged their services ; but Wellington could afford to be generous to others—he had only to serve his country, and had no motive for running others down, and even to his foes he gave due praise.

What a man he was for sharp, emphatic words ! He never compassed an object by crooked plans, but went to his mark in a straight line, and hit the right nail on the head. He remains a model of Spartan laconism, of Roman heroism, like unto them who returned to their homes, content with serving their cause, even though that cause had not served them. Napoleon knew how to flatter the vanity of his soldiery, and could appeal to the power of enthusiasm. He talked to them of forty centuries looking down from the pyramids, yet he could laugh at it as moonshine. The Emperor Napoleon could say, when it suited him, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet." He appealed to noble sentiments, yet did not believe in them. He used sentiment and romance, and did wonders with them, but despised them all the time. But our cold-blooded Englishman had the peculiarity of our fathers, feeling much but saying little. He makes no vain addresses to his soldiers—there are no pyramids for forty centuries to look down from. He has but one word—a cold-looking one, with no romance in it—a solemn, awful word—

the word "duty." The French, on reading his despatches, never found the word "glory;" but the duke said, "If men do their duty, glory will follow." He knew how to work an army on the principle of duty. He did not tell them of sacked towns, or bid them keep up the memory of their sires. He only spoke of duty. Can you peace-men say a word against such a man, who led his army through every trouble with only one word—"duty"? Even as a religious man, the duke seemed to be a man under orders. He was once asked about missions,—if it was not better to keep people at home, rather than send them to China and other places? He answered, "I don't think so—what are your marching orders?" "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Had anyone any right to give you orders?" "Yes, the Great Captain of Salvation." "That is all I care for," said the duke; and that principle went into the minutest details of his life. For this, I respect Wellington more than I respect Napoleon for blotting out the word "impossibility." Though the name of Napoleon will always make the most noise in the world, yet, as peace becomes more loved, and war more hated, and men more just, will Wellington's name abide in far more honour than Napoleon's.

These two great men were brought together at the crisis of their fate, having been trained apart, and unknown to each other, until their destiny, and the destinies of their respective countries, and the future of Europe hung in battle, when the genius of our countryman and the good fortune of our land gained the triumph. Perhaps I have, in the eyes of some, contrasted too much in favour of our countryman, and to the disadvantage of the foreigner; but I adhere to it, giving to the Frenchman more genius and poetic nature, but retaining for our countryman all moral superiority, a greater character, a better balanced judgment, a want of egotism, and a forgetfulness of self. The ultimate place which the two characters must take, depends on the standard of greatness set up. If that standard consists in being true to the genius of country, in the love of duty more than glory, being a lover of truth, a flatterer of no man, but simple, plain, and ascetic, then I claim the palm for our countryman, and put him immeasurably above his great opponent. I do not wish to underrate the mighty genius of Napoleon, but to indicate in what he was superior to

Wellington ; for he had that which, distinguished with the subtlety of genius, had the power of improvising things, possessed much of the ideal, romantic, and poetic, and understood better than Wellington the force of ideas, sentiments, and sympathies ; for in history there is no nobler triumph of thought over material force than the return of Napoleon from Elba to France, unbefriended, and yet confident in the love of the French for him. The landing from Elba is the most marvellous fact in history ; it showed Napoleon's genius, and proved him to be a greater man than one had suspected him to be ; for that is the best genius which knows how to avail itself of the powers lying dormant in the human soul. Napoleon trusted to great thoughts in France, and they did not desert him. But catch Wellington landing without an army, or the probability of having one ! No trusting in romance with him. How he would have sneered at Napoleon under such circumstances ; and though I regard the scene as theatrical bombast, yet I admire the principle which led Napoleon to leave Elba, march to Paris, gather an army, dare Waterloo, and lose all. In this respect Wellington was greatly inferior. Napoleon lost his labour in devoting altogether to himself that which he might have given to mankind. Napoleon's life was an awful experiment to discover whether a man could succeed by trampling on conscience, truth, and faith, and so do without such things ; and I, as a moralist, rejoice that he was defeated. Napoleon fell as a man whose soul is taken out of him. Members of Peace Societies and preachers may yet preach an endless sermon from Napoleon's history to show that the back-bone of the world is righteousness and truth, that God's word ever remains sure, and that no man shall prosper without the salt of righteousness to keep true life within him.

Napoleon's lies at St Helena are damning evidence against him. In the early part of life, Napoleon was industrious, usually wise, and generally exact. Later on, the curse of egotism came upon him, he lost the power of being patient and quiet, and in his latter days he could not keep his temper. Our great countryman was always level with his fortune, never repining when it came to the worst, and at his best he was even and calm. He shaved himself on the morning of Waterloo with a calm hand, when "the battle of the giants" was coming on. Although dancing at a ball the

night before, yet he knew of the battle coming on, and had prepared for it, not being taken by surprise as many have supposed. It is a most wonderful thing in his history, that of a calm, cool shave on the morning of Waterloo. Yet, when listening to the long list of the slain, he dropped his head, and tear after tear fell from his eyes; but, when he suspected the serjeant saw him in that state, he said, "Go on," showing that he had an eye to weep, a heart to be wounded, nerves that could be shaken, and a soul that could be sad. Napoleon went on like a frantic child after the destruction of Moscow, because it was ruin to him; but Wellington ever consoled himself with knowing that he had done his duty, that he had done everything his country could ask, and opportunity could give, and therefore he was perfectly calm, and could breakfast before the battle, and sup after. Fortune never made him a madman. He had his defects—an absence of understanding of public opinion, a somewhat narrowness of vision—and he lacked the genial power of making himself loved. Whether his soldiers loved him or not, it is certain they greatly feared and respected him, because he was, what every man should be who leads, "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well."

I consider Napoleon's life to have been an awful failure in every respect, and see not where he has succeeded, except in retaining a name amongst a list of terrible warriors and of terrible tyrants also. Napoleon's course was heralded in by the great French Revolution, which he afterwards smothered in imperial velvet, raising himself into a rotten power, fetching one of the oldest things in Europe to Paris to be crowned by it, and adopting all the worn-out toggery of ceremonialism of which he had been the great opponent. He left France poorer and smaller than he found it; he seated in the heart of the French that curse of nations, the love of glory, cursed it with a military spirit—the abominable worship of war as a fair and comely thing. He stained the people with their greatest faults, and did them incalculable harm. Hence he failed in everything—he left a mighty name and an awful smoke. He smothered Europe in cannon-smoke, and from the sad effects it will be many a long year before it recovers. He left France with the hatred of the French, who rejoiced at Waterloo; for they found that, conquer

what he would, there was more to conquer, and France was tired of him. On the whole, his life appears a wonderful episode, without any vital connection with the sublime life of the world.

Wellington succeeded, but a great part of his work failed because he was a mere resister. He had no affirmative. Resist, resist, was his cry all his life long. He was engaged in a war against a nation with which we had no business. What business had we to engage in a war for the purpose of propping up the throne of an incapable Bourbon? We have dishonoured our fathers' great names, and, verily, we have our reward—a national debt, heavy taxes, posterity mortgaged, and ourselves overburdened. I do not advocate repudiation, for we must suffer for the sins of our fathers, who did wrong to suffer themselves to be led into the war; but when in it, why, like Englishmen, they could only fight it out. Wellington was the champion of a cause that was contrary to the genius of his country. His life was an eminent success, but the greater part of his work was an eminent failure. He fought the cause of Legitimacy *versus* the people. And how bright the cause of Legitimacy looks just now in Europe! Just as we are burying the champion of Legitimacy, the child of it, the Count Chambord, is waiting to be called by the people to the throne of France. Even at this moment, the position of him who is now almost crowned in Paris, is a great protest against Legitimacy; for every vote given for the Empire is one of the nails in the coffin of Legitimacy, which will place it in the history of the past; for it shows that the people will be sovereign, and that the attempt to put them down was a failure. But if Wellington has done nothing more than to save this little Island from Napoleon, it is a great success. To save this land, was to preserve the eye of the world; to have saved this little land, the ark of liberty—to have saved the chosen people of the land of our fathers, is no mean work; and that Wellington did do. But so far as it was an attempt to restore Legitimacy, it was a great failure; for the Bourbons have run away, and, I believe, for ever.

Napoleon died a prisoner, and he deserved his fate; and I do not see why the sentence should not be done on the great man as on the small. I may be sorry for his sufferings; but when I see his wicked works, counting the world as no more than a battle-

field ; when I think of the blood-thirsty massacre of Jaffa ; when I look at his deeds, public and private,—you must not expect me to drivel in sentimentalism over St Helena. He who stakes civilisation, with freedom — freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press—against his own glory, must expect that, if he loses, mankind will chain him to a rock. I never did, and never intend to shed a tear over Napoleon at St Helena. When I think of his lies at St Helena, I cannot pity his fate—it is one of God's awful lessons. Sometimes God keeps between unjust deeds and their punishment a long interval ; but in this case the man worshipped a lie, and for his reward went to the grave with a lie in his right hand.

When Wellington retired from war he began a new life. Napoleon had only one. He forgot the country to serve himself ; he shall therefore die far from his country, and be hated by his countrymen. The other was a man of truth and duty, and he shall have a serene old age, shall be the counsellor of kings, and be looked up to by the people. He who does his duty shall die in peace and quiet in old age at home.

As a statesman Wellington cannot be called great and glorious. Great men are those who in early life see a great truth, love it, and, whether it find favour or not, die with it on their lips. Great statesmen are those who originate measures, and see them carried—not those who come in at the close of the struggle. Wellington never originated any great work, and therefore cannot be called a great or glorious statesman. Just what the nation now wants, Wellington has been to it. His disposition as a soldier unfitted him to be a great statesman. If he could have put ideas into regiments, and principles into squadrons, he would have been a great statesman. He wanted the peculiar genius to understand the nation. He must fall as a statesman. He could not see his foe, or he never would have been beaten. What was to be done with things that he could not shoot ? What was to be done with such a people as us ? Here was his lack of understanding the presiding thought of a people to be mightier than physical force. This is a power before which kings and conquerors, like the hosts of Sennacherib's army, go down into death. Men who could not hold a sword have been more powerful than any king the world ever saw. This kind of enemy Wellington

did not understand. He did not understand "Captain Pen," nor was he half alive to the power of ink, nor what armies go to battle when only a single goose-quill goes to fight. He had not that mighty gift of genius which takes cognisance of the force by which men are shaped, moulded, and governed. He did not half understand civil liberty, having been trained too much in the army. He could have drilled the people, and pipe-clayed us all. He did not understand how to hold the iron hand in the velvet glove. He did not know how to rule the people with an iron hand of power, and yet make them believe they were governing themselves.

Wellington knew this, and admitted that he was not qualified for the station of government. He undertook, at the request of his friends, to fight a battle which he did not understand—to fight with men whom he had never fought before, and he was constantly beaten. There is nothing more complimentary that can be said of him, than that he acknowledged he was not fit for a statesman; but he said his friends told him he was sure to conquer, and he had never before taken any word but his own. Here, for once, he and his friends had their reward. So it will happen to us when friends try to persuade us against the interior voice.

As to Catholic Emancipation, he had opposed it, his predilections were against it; and when he came into power and wished to carry it, he had a large part of the public mind against him—the aristocracy and clergydom were against him—which was a hard thing for a poor soldier like Wellington. He had the spirit of Exeter Hall against him, his own consistency was against him, and he had Protestantism in general against him. But he knew there was a terrible alternative—to carry that Bill, or have a civil war. There were those who declared that the Bill must not pass, and that the people were ready to go to civil war in defence of Protestant principles, and so forth. But listen to what the soldier, grim with war, said:—"It has been my lot to see much of war, more than most men. I have been engaged in the military profession from my boyhood; my life has been familiar with scenes of death and spectacles of suffering in other countries which were the seat of war; and, rather than the country dear to me should be visited with such calamities, I would make any sacrifice—I

would lay down my life." The man who said that never boasted nor ever lied. He spoke the thing that was, and the words remain an abiding honour to his memory. The man believed there was not a law in the statute-books worth the loss of one life by civil war.

He did not run away, but retreated, as he did in Spain, to begin again. He enabled the Conservative cause to renew the combat at another time. He went thoroughly through his work, and a useful statesman it cannot be denied that he was. It was a great, brave, and bold thing, and, according to my creed, a necessary thing.

Wellington's next great trial was the Reform Bill, when he seemed to forget himself, and to have turned prophet, prophesying that if the Reform Bill were carried, the sun of England would set. He stood it out firmly and boldly, but the people passed him by; and I defy you to show a nobler sight than Englishmen on that occasion passing by the hero and leaving him behind. The people said, "Shall we bow down and let him ride over us. because he is a great man? shall we lay our will at the altar of our hero?" That is the stuff of Englishmen. They would honour the man, but would not abdicate to him. There is no Colossus that has ever been thought of that can bestride this land. If Wellington thwarted the people, he must be put aside. If the French had known this in the day of their strength, and said to Napoleon, "Though you are great, France is greater," and not have sold themselves to him, it would have been well for them. England knew better. We said, "We worship our nation first, our great men second." Wellington stormed, resisted, prophesied, fell; and we went forward. While I mourn the petty insults of the people on that occasion, I venerate the sublime calmness with which a great nation passed him by. He had a sixty or seventy peerage power with him in his pocket, and on the Corn Law question he said to his followers, "I am going, you must come." He went; they followed. That was his great utility. He commanded the peers as he did a squadron, when to sit down, get up, go forward, or retreat. He could make them do as he pleased, which was a great thing, and so prevented great discord and civil war. He would support the Queen's Government whether it belonged to his own or the other side. He stood the

figure of the Queen's counsellor, the friend of all parties, and though without a crown, he was greater than any crowned head, and he became a household sight and a household word to us—he was the old man whom we knew so well, whose figure every Englishman knew by heart. He died, loved by all, in a good old age, and a whole nation went to his funeral, to which nothing is equal in history.

In conclusion, I again express my hatred of war. If I have said anything in praise of war I have not meant it, unless it were in defence of country, creed, household and home. I have not defended or glorified war. I do not forget the virtues and faults of the two men, Wellington and Napoleon, and I will render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

THE PRINCE CONSORT: FUNERAL ELOGE.

BORN 1819. MARRIED 1840. DIED 1861.

IF it had been possible to doubt for a moment the depth of the sorrow that stirs this great nation at the present time, this meeting is a sufficient answer to it; and if the propriety of our assembling together * were doubted, the occasion is justification sufficient. At the same time, I ask you to pardon the weakness of any words I may have to speak touching the merits of one who was not only great in position but great in soul; not only lofty in exaltation, but righteous in spirit; who was just in all things, walking humbly towards God and charitably towards men. We have not met here to discourse on death, but to praise the dead for the goodness he has shown; for praise is always a strengthener to virtue, and the opportunity to bestow it is a gain to the soul. It is not always, however, that preachers of righteousness have been called upon to utter the praises of princes or of kings; for the history of the great is but too often the history of the bad, and the history of the mighty the history of the corruptness of the earth. But when we can praise a prince, it becomes us to do it. Though virtue is always lovely, yet when God raises it into high places it gains an additional lustre. Like the little lamp which lights the humble cottage, but, when mounted on high, throws its feeble glimmer across the broad sea, and is the beacon to many a storm-tossed mariner, so, whenever justice and righteousness are exalted to a throne, they shine so much the clearer and so much the farther abroad. So with the Prince we have met to commemorate. As exalted was he in station as he was just in spirit; as holy, kindly, gentle-hearted, and true in private life, as he was distinguished, noble, and great in birth—noble in all things, whether public or private.

It therefore becomes us to pour out as full a cup of praise as

* In the Town Hall, Birmingham.

we can upon that great good man who now seeks burial at the hands of this nation of his adoption. And in doing so, we cannot do better than call to mind two texts in the New Testament—one relating to the centurion, of whom it is said, “he loved our nation, and builded us a synagogue,” and the other relating to the widow, who did everything that in her lay for the good of the community. On the first text, I shall show how he has loved our nation, and on the other show, out of his own words, how heartily he penetrated into the glories of the English character for the purpose of doing us good.

Concerning his love for our nation. A foreigner by birth, taking one of the noblest positions in the world and one of the loveliest of charges upon him, he had grace enough to acknowledge it, and to fulfil one of the most delicate of duties—to find out exactly what he had to do, and do it, and to find out exactly what he had not to do, and to abstain from doing it; whatsoever there was of personal ambition or personal feeling about him he repressed, and came amongst us only to do his duty uprightly, and to serve God and work righteousness in our midst. By the jealousies of this nation, not altogether unwarranted by history, he was denied that active part in political power which we forbid all our princes, and he submitted to it humbly, and, keeping himself from all party politics, secured a position in a sphere far above them. This was a duty he had set himself, and one he faithfully fulfilled. How truly, may be gathered from a sentence he uttered on receiving the freedom of the city of London, at the hands of the Merchant Tailors’ Company. “I remember,” he said, “with what regret when, shortly after I came of age, the Companies of the Goldsmiths and of the Fishmongers offered me their freedom, I found myself compelled to decline this honour, being informed that, identified as they were by historical tradition, and still representing two opposite political parties, I could make a choice of only one of them; and fully sensible that, like the Sovereign to whom I had just been united, and to devote my whole existence to whom it had become my privilege, I could belong only to the nation at large, free from the trammels, and above the dissensions of political parties.” So he understood his duty, accepted it, obeyed it, and served God.

And he understood Englishmen. He understood that nothing

was dearer to them than that sweet old word "home"; knew that our glorious forefathers, before the Gospel was given to men, had loved it, maintained its chastity, its purity, and its honour; knew that when Odin was worshipped, those fierce old Pagans were gentle towards women, tender towards children, lovers of the house, and cheerful by their own fireside, and thought, doubtless, that the all-loving God, looking down upon them from the mercy-seat, and seeing them so gentle and so strong, so loving and so fierce, gave them the glorious Gospel of peace and salvation as a reward for their simplicity and true-heartedness, and made them the greatest people upon the earth. We have, as a people, our sins, but we have, as a nation, our excellences; and the glory of this country is that there are in it so many homes, pure in morals, sweet in spirit, holy in living, kindly and gentle, and genial and true, and this great man lifted this glory of our country up on high, carried it into the precincts of the palace, and became faithful as a husband, gentle as a father, as an educator far-seeing, and as an example perfect. Knowing that the iniquity of the great was the subversion of government, he sweetened Royalty by making it virtuous and honourable. One need not pass through the ugly records of the past—through the long history of Courts made obscene by lust, disgraceful by luxury, and abominable by oppression; nor read how the harlot trod the royal presence chamber, and lustful revellers passed through the palace as it pleased them—to find out how odious had become the name of Court, and of Royalty as well. But he, whose goodness we have met to commemorate, coming amongst us a stranger, took, as it were, a bunch of hyssop, out of the virtues of lowly life, and, dipping it in the sweet waters of holy living, sprinkled it upon the lust-stained walls of palaces, and as the husband, father, friend, and prince, purified high places, and made them once more comely. And we thank him for it from our hearts, for he has made government pleasant, monarchy mighty, royalty lovely; he has made high places sweet places, purified the steps of the throne, and knit this nation together into such a love for its monarchy as ages past have never seen, and ages to come will perish in death before they see equalled.

And then, with respect to English society, he belonged to no circle, but he looked around and was at home in every part of it.

Touch English life wherever you may, there you find the Prince. Amongst even domestic servants his presence was to be found ; and at a meeting of the Domestic Servants' Provident and Benevolent Society this is how he spoke of them :—"Who would not feel the deepest interest in the welfare of their domestic servants? Whose heart would fail to sympathise with those who minister to us in all the wants of daily life, attend us in sickness, receive us upon our first appearance in this world, and even extend their cares to our mortal remains ; who live under our roof, form our household, and are a part of our family?" Such words as these are a little poem in themselves.

Then we find him always taking a lively interest in the glorious old occupation of agriculture ; the old peasants of England were his delight, and those who do not do them the justice they deserve may learn a lesson from their Prince. Prince Albert was a farmer himself, and knew that there was a piety in providing food for a people, and tilling the soil of a nation. At Windsor Park, in 1851, at a meeting of agriculturists, he said, and it was in a tent he said it :—"Your encampment singularly contrasts with that which the barons of England, the feudal lords of the land, with their retainers, erected round Old Windsor Castle in a similar mead, though not exactly in the same locality. They came, then, clad in steel, with lance and war-horse ; you appear in more peaceful attire, and the animals you bring with you are the tokens of your successful cultivation of the arts of peace. King John came trembling among his subjects, unwillingly compelled to sign that great Charter which has ever since been your birthright. Your Sovereign came confiding among her loyal and loving people ; she came to admire the results of their industry, and to encourage them to persevere in their exertions."

But though he was a son of the soil, and put his hand truly to the plough, he was not so wedded to the land that he could not be wedded to the sea. At Liverpool we find him making a speech in favour of the Sailors' Home, and at Grimsby opening the docks, pouring out his intelligent understanding in praise of the sailor, than whom amongst all Englishmen there are none so lovable and none so lovely ; none who deserve so much and get so little, or who in stirring times so nobly vindicate the honour of this great country and maintain the glory of that old flag which

—the phrase may be threadbare ; but God knows, the flag will never be—has “braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze.”

Then he identified himself with us as a commercial nation. It was not for him to curl his lip in scorn at a “nation of shop-keepers ;” that was for blood-stained oppressors and cruel tyrants. He was always with the manufacturer and his workmen, and he had a lesson to teach us and laboured hard to teach it, and the lesson was this, that whosoever fails to do his work as intelligently as he can, fails in his duty to his country, by compromising its honour among the nations of the earth. Perhaps the greatest speech the Prince ever delivered on this subject was that which he delivered in this town, and so great is it that it should be read again and again.

And yet this man, so great and so lofty, and so intellectual and so useful, was to be found amongst the humblest. We might follow him down to the lowly school, giving his wise counsel and his kindly assistance, knowing that education was worthless unless it went down to the lowest places in the land ; and then follow him up again to the greatest colleges in the world, still giving his counsel and assistance, and glorying in the glories of antiquity.

Then, as to his being a religious man, he belonged to that great old English Church, which, however much some of us may differ with it in views, has roofed over as much piety and temporal godliness as has made our country great and glorious in its Christianity. To it he belonged ; of it he was a member ; in it he worshipped ; and for it he spoke. But, though a Protestant, he was something wider and something better too ; for he was a man who worshipped God in the spirit and the principles of old times, but according to the ritual, the mode, and fashions of modern men. Too many of our neighbours are so very fond of going to ancient times, of getting palms and pomegranates from Palestine to lay upon the altar ; but he was one who loved to serve the God of England with such appliances as God has given Englishmen to do it with, and he thought the offering of a golden sheaf of English wheat was far more acceptable than all the fruits of foreign lands together. Prince Albert was not a man to turn to ancient times ; he served his God with art and science, with modern industry and mechanism, in order that whatsoever England

had to do, she might do it conscientiously, honestly, and truly, and thus make the most acceptable offering she could to a loving and bountiful God who had blessed her so highly.

He was, too, an English gentleman ; he loved his horse and his dog, and the good old wholesome sports of England ; and he loved the open fields, and the good fresh air, and everything else that is good in our good old country. As a gentleman, he was courteous and affable, and as a Prince noble and generous ; as a husband and a father he was loving and gentle, and as a Christian humble and dutiful. It is not for us to open the door of that secret closet that has been closed from all prying by the Master Himself, but still we may loyally and reverentially stand outside and await his coming forth, to judge by his fruits—his love to God and Englishmen—of the sincerity of his devotion and religion.

His greatest praise, perhaps, is that much was never said against his character : and the nation must be hard up for finding a fault when it complains that he has listened to the Queen when she talked to her ministers. We can pardon the suspicion and the prejudices that prompt the complaint, but we must always remember that when God called him to be the husband of the topmost woman in the topmost nation in the world, He called him to be her adviser and her guide.

Perhaps, too, he was not so open and so genial as Englishmen would have loved to see him ; but that was probably owing to the difficulty of maintaining his position, and when criticism has to pick up such small rods to chastise a great man's memory, it is very pitiful indeed, and especially in the case of a man of whom it may be said that he was an Englishman indeed, in whom there was no guile.

So great and so good was he, that we may all hope that a few thoughts upon his merits will lead us so to act that we may take up his unfinished plans and finish them for him ; for in that way most shall we show our love for him and our reverence for his memory. And though it has pleased Almighty God to bring over this nation a cloud so heavy and so dark that this Christmas-day that is coming can be but a short outburst of sunshine, heralded in by a black and gloomy day, and perhaps followed by another, we may find in this great sorrow of ours a blessing of heaven ;

for it may be that from this open grave of a Prince there may pass some spirit that shall breathe over the troublous nations such a rebuke to human pride, and human wrong, and human folly, that peace and goodwill may prevail, and righteousness abound in all the places of the earth.

In looking, too, upon this widowed woman and these fatherless children, who have lost their best guide and protector, we may virtuously sorrow over the grave, and give way to such a flow of sympathy and brotherly love as shall, if war comes upon us, knit our hearts strongly together, and cause us to sink all our petty differences, and stand side by side to vindicate the honour of the country our Prince has loved so well and served so truly.

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